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Domestic Stresses in the USSR [redacted] 25X1

An Intelligence Assessment

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SOV 86-10017X
April 1986

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Domestic Stresses in the USSR

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by Office of Soviet Analysis, with a contribution from SOVA. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Domestic Policy Division, SOVA,

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Domestic Stresses in the USSR 25X1

Key Judgments

Information available as of 24 February 1986 was used in this report.

Gorbachev's ability to achieve his ambitious economic and social goals depends critically on his success in dealing with the wide array of interrelated domestic problems that have accumulated over the past decade. As consumption growth tapered off in the 1970s and the population became less isolated from the outside world, popular discontent grew, especially among youth, religious believers, and national minorities. Leadership ineptitude and bureaucratic corruption exacerbated these problems and eroded the system's legitimacy in the public mind. Partly as a result of growing popular morale problems, the spectrum of antisocial behavior—crime, alcohol abuse, and sporadic unrest—widened.

These problems are not likely to produce a fundamental challenge to regime control during the remainder of the 1980s, although spontaneous large-scale localized disturbances may occur. Nor are tensions within the elite itself likely to grow to the point of destabilizing the system. Domestic pressures, however, will probably exert a more significant influence on regime policy than at any time since the period after Stalin's death. Concern to prevent unrest, limit the economic costs of societal malaise, and shore up popular and elite confidence in the system will be a major factor in leadership decisions about a wide range of issues—investment strategy, economic reform, social policy, and perhaps even foreign policy.

The leadership has long known that corruption, popular cynicism, and various social pathologies adversely affect the regime's economic and social goals. More recently, there has been increased recognition that at some point domestic problems could combine to produce political instability. Andropov, Chernenko, and Gorbachev have stated in public speeches that internal problems, if unattended or mishandled, could spiral out of control and produce social "collisions" or a political "crisis."

Growing concern within the Soviet establishment about the USSR's vulnerability to outside pressures has fed these fears. Many officials are worried that increased access to information from the West, especially through foreign radiobroadcasting, is intensifying the frustrations of many citizens about Soviet living standards and enabling them to evaluate regime propaganda more critically. Officials are also concerned that the war in Afghanistan is damaging morale within the elite and heightening popular pessimism about the future. Most important, the crisis in Poland has brought home to Soviet elites the potentially disastrous consequences of an attitude of equanimity toward domestic problems.

Although aware of the problems, Brezhnev did little to address them, both because he was reluctant to make the politically tough decisions and because of his own disability. Gorbachev, however, has set for himself the ambitious objective of reviving Soviet Communism—by revitalizing the economy, the society, the ideology, and the party itself. Partly because his vision and aspirations are broader than Brezhnev's, he sees the same domestic situation in more alarming terms. He has been critical of past regime failure to take timely action, and clearly believes that continued unwillingness to attack the problems could eventually lead to a more unstable and threatening situation.

The General Secretary, building on initiatives started under Andropov, has moved vigorously to address the societal and economic ailments confronting the regime. Although his program is still in the developmental stage, Gorbachev apparently intends to avoid sharp swings toward repression or liberalization while utilizing elements of both approaches. Likely steps, many of which are extensions of current initiatives, include:

- Tightening labor discipline, increasing rewards for productive workers, and imposing heavier penalties on laggards.
- Employing harsher measures against dissent and religious activism, while increasing radio jamming and taking other steps to limit Western influences on Soviet society.
- Stiffening penalties for criminal offenses and upgrading the law enforcement apparatus.
- Appearing more responsive to public opinion, discussing problems with greater candor, and more openly using Russian nationalism as a prop to the system.
- Infusing the elite with younger and more competent individuals, while moving to reduce official corruption.
- Increasing efforts to indoctrinate youth through an educational reform, adopting a set of measures to bolster the family as a pillar of social stability, and continuing the campaign to restrict alcohol consumption.
- Improving consumer welfare through more efficient organization and greater budgetary allocations.

These policies—if enacted and pursued as vigorously as those now under way—will increase turbulence within society and the elite. Within officialdom, powerful vested interests will attempt to slow the pace and limit the scope of change. Competition for prerogatives and position will be heightened by the replacement of older and less competent party workers with

younger and better qualified men, the move to attack entrenched regional networks by giving more preferential treatment to Russian elites in non-Russian republics, the campaign against official corruption, and the limitations on job security. Shifts in resource allocation policy will pit bureaucracies against one another. The adoption of controversial new social policies such as the antialcohol campaign will intensify elite debate over whether a new course will disrupt the truce between state and society.

Within society, a tougher work ethic, stricter discipline, and more differentiated wages will strain relations between high and low performers at the workplace. Some types of economic reform, by undercutting worker job security and removing subsidies for basic commodities, could provoke labor strikes. Ordinary citizens will find the campaigns against crime and economic illegality, alcoholism, religion, and draft dodging increasingly cutting into their personal lives and constraining their public behavior. The educational reform will be resented by those whose opportunities for upward social mobility are restricted by it. Intensified Russification may lead to more extreme forms of protest among disaffected minorities.

Gorbachev is counting on the support of the "strong" elements of both the elite and the society to make his program work. Indeed, the regime may well be able to achieve some marginal upswing in economic performance, arrest the erosion of instruments of control and mobilization, and generate somewhat greater popular respect for the power and capabilities of the regime.

Even so, Soviet leaders will face continuing problems throughout the 1980s and beyond. Soviet societal problems result from fundamental contemporary conditions that the regime is unable or unwilling to alter. The growing sophistication of consumer demand is a natural consequence of the very process of economic modernization that the regime wants to further. The growing size of the critically thinking public is the result of expanded education, which is essential to the country's progress. The exposure of the population to external influences is partly due to technological advances in communications beyond the regime's control.

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It is by no means certain what combination of policies the Gorbachev regime will adopt or how far change will reach. Some of the moves he has made thus far were unexpected, and further unconventional changes and surprises will probably follow. But extreme moves toward broad liberalization of the system or toward sharply increased repression would probably not become options unless the leadership decided domestic problems had reached crisis proportions.

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Preface

This Intelligence Assessment, [redacted] 25X1
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expanded analysis and fuller elaboration of evidence regarding the political and social dimensions of domestic stresses in the USSR.

Accurate assessment of societal issues suffers from severe data problems. The Soviets regard information on many social pathologies, such as crime rates, as state secrets. They rarely publish overall statistics on social trends and conduct little sociological research. Many of their published surveys on public attitudes suffer from methodological flaws, as do informal polls conducted by Radio Liberty. Emigre reporting and Soviet dissident literature, although important sources, may suffer from problems of bias. Much [redacted] embassy reporting is impressionistic or anecdotal. 25X1
Moreover, many of the trends being examined are attitudinal ones that cannot be readily quantified.

Consequently, while all of the conclusions in this paper can be supported with documentation, few can be rigorously "proved." Nevertheless, we are confident that the analysis presented here is on target. We can discern the general direction of trends in regime-society relations even if we cannot determine precisely the extent of the change observed. This assessment thus constitutes a baseline for future collection and analysis on a subject that will merit frequent reexamination in the years ahead.

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Domestic Stresses in the USSR [redacted] 25X1

Summary

The Soviet regime of General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev faces an array of serious political and social problems that are closely interrelated with adverse economic stresses. Although many of the strains in the system and society have been present for decades, some of them have become worse since the mid-1970s, making it increasingly difficult for Gorbachev's activist regime to steer a course that avoids both social unrest and economic stagnation. Over the past decade, social cohesiveness and ideological faith have declined, and bureaucratic corruption has mounted. Erosion has been evident in the regime's basic values and norms, and its legitimacy in the eyes of the population has suffered.

How Kremlin leaders cope with accumulated domestic difficulties will affect the vitality and stability of the system in the years to come and will significantly influence the growth of Soviet power. There are strong pressures for change to restore dynamism, direction, and discipline to the elite and the society at large. At the same time, change itself, even if carefully managed, could prove economically hazardous, socially disruptive, and politically contentious.

Sources of Stability

Since World War II Soviet society has been one of the most stable and politically quiescent in the world. There have been three main reasons for this.

First, the Soviet regime has powerful instruments of control and indoctrination. These include a huge propaganda and censorship apparatus, an educational system that inculcates children with "socialist values," mass organizations like the Komsomol that serve the same function, and an internal political police force that has vast repressive capabilities and maintains a network of informers in all institutions and enterprises. The top political leadership has been able to ensure the loyalty and obedience of key elites by manipulating a system of privileges to tie elite interests closely to the successful functioning of the system and by using institutionalized mechanisms for monitoring and controlling elite activities.

Second, for most of the time since Stalin's death in 1953, the regime has provided its citizens with what most of them cherish above all—peace, public order, personal security, and a gradual improvement in the standard of living:

- The diet has improved considerably and become more varied over the past 25 years. The quantity and quality of consumer goods has improved markedly as well.

- The system guarantees education, medical care, jobs, and pensions for all. However deficient these welfare services may be, many Soviet citizens derive comfort from the feeling that they do not have to fear the unemployment, periodic depressions, ruthless competition, and prohibitive medical expenses they associate with capitalism.

- Until recently, the state kept violent crime at a minimum, at least in public places. Most Soviet citizens believe that strong law and order is an inherent advantage of socialism over Western capitalist countries—which Soviet propagandists portray as violent, degenerate, and morally bankrupt societies.

- Until the invasion of Afghanistan, the regime kept Soviet soldiers out of foreign wars—important to a population that lost 20 million lives in World War II.

Third, habits and attitudes that are deeply rooted in Russian history have made it easier for the regime to maintain social control:

- Most of the population lacks any tradition of individual rights or political democracy. Never having participated in political life, Soviet citizens see the regime as a world apart and are extraordinarily apathetic toward "high politics." Identifying Western liberty with social anarchy, and lacking any democratic heritage, many of them perceive no alternative to authoritarian rule.

- Until recently, Soviet consumers had relatively simple aspirations. The country has only recently emerged as an urban, industrial society, and many city dwellers are only one generation removed from the farm.

Never having enjoyed material prosperity, the population has exhibited a high tolerance of deprivation.

- The great psychological gulf separating the educated classes from workers and peasants has effectively prevented any convergence of worker and intelligentsia dissent and made it easier for the regime to use "divide and rule" tactics. The intelligentsia has traditionally seen the lower classes as a "dark" element, fearing that any "revolt of the masses" would turn into an uncontrollable orgy of destruction. Most workers distrust the intelligentsia as a privileged, self-interested stratum.

- Until now the continuing vitality of Russian nationalism has been a major asset for the regime. Most Russians oppose any significant increase in autonomy for the non-Russian nationalities who now make up over half the population. Many fear that any major reforms could unleash separatist strivings of the minorities. As a result, they have accepted strong central control as necessary to maintain Russian hegemony.

- Moreover, strong patriotic impulses cause many Russians and other Slavs to take pride in the USSR's superpower role and in Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe. To a considerable degree, the regime has succeeded in conditioning the population to believe that any internal opposition plays into the hands of foreign enemies.

Growth of Discontent and Tension

Despite these strong forces for stability, developments over the past decade have weakened several props to the system and given rise to greater public discontent about internal conditions:

- Most important, beginning in the mid-1970s, growth in the economy began to slow, leading to a virtual stagnation of consumption. Since this came on the heels of rapid advancements in consumer welfare in the Khrushchev and early Brezhnev years, many people had the feeling that their material circumstances were actually deteriorating and that the country was going backward.

- Over the past two decades there has been a hardening of class lines. In the early decades of Soviet rule, rapid industrialization, the Stalin purges, and the manpower losses of World War II had enabled huge numbers of enterprising individuals to vault themselves from one class into another, to rise "from peasant to commissar." In today's middle-aged system, opportunities for upward social mobility are more limited.

- During the 1970s the population became less isolated from the outside world. With detente there was a modest increase in trade with the West, tourism and emigration grew, and the regime temporarily stopped jamming some Western radiobroadcasts into the USSR. At the same time, the spread of mass communications brought Finnish television into Estonian homes and Polish television into Ukrainian homes. As the regime's monopoly of information loosened, Soviet citizens were better able to compare their lot with that of peoples enjoying a much higher standard of living, and to gain access to foreign news that enabled them to evaluate regime propaganda more critically.

- The passage of time has had an effect on the population's outlook. The regime tries hard to keep memories of World War II alive both as a symbol of national unity and as a reminder of how much life has improved since those days of hardship. But many young people today are comparing their situation not with the difficult Soviet past but with contemporary conditions in Eastern Europe and even in the capitalist West. Even many older citizens say that in the absence of a national crisis they are tired of waiting for a tomorrow that never comes. Moreover, there has been a decline in the level of fear, especially among young people who have no personal memories of the Stalin purges. They are speaking out more readily in criticism of current internal conditions.

- Since the 1960s, ideology has atrophied as a force for mobilizing the work force. Unfulfilled regime promises (such as the promise in the 1961 Communist Party Program of attaining the world's highest living standard by 1980) have made most citizens extremely cynical about regime propaganda. In fact, not many Soviets any longer believe in the Communist "tomorrow."

- During Brezhnev's tenure, corruption grew at all levels of officialdom, increasing popular resentment of the abuses of office of the ruling elite and eroding respect for law and authority. Moreover, the general "stability of cadres" and the ability of elite members to secure education and positions for their children have given the privileged elite some characteristics of a hereditary aristocratic class and generated resentment among nonelite elements.

- In recent years, the decrepitude of the senior party leadership and the sense of policy drift and absence of firm direction at the top have damaged the regime's image and made the Politburo itself the butt of numerous popular jokes.

The mood of the Soviet population has clearly shifted. The optimism of the 1960s has given way to a more demanding, less believing, and less pliable society, as manifested in a variety of related ways:

- Worker morale has fallen, increasing labor productivity problems. Many workers appear to think there is little point in exerting themselves since wages are low even for high performers and there is a shortage of quality goods to buy.

- Much of the population has become more materialistic, infatuated with Western goods and fashions, and inclined to denigrate Soviet merchandise.

- More citizens are "dropping out" of public activities and pursuing more rewarding private affairs, such as trafficking on the black market. Subcultures beyond the regime's purview, such as rock music, have expanded.

- Soviet youth are increasingly engaging in various types of "deviant" and "delinquent" behavior—drifting, dodging the draft, rejecting marriage. A few have even experimented with prostitution and Hare Krishna.

- Crime appears to have grown significantly in the late 1970s, and teenage gangs have even made their appearance in some cities. Widespread theft from the state is accepted as normal and even regarded as legitimate by many people.

- Alcohol abuse, Russia's national pastime and historical plague, has assumed alarming proportions. This "monstrous phenomenon," as the Politburo recently called it, is a major reason the USSR is the only industrial nation in the world with a declining male life expectancy.

- The USSR faces an emerging drug problem, partly because of the exposure of soldiers in Afghanistan to drugs. Most Soviet conscripts in Afghanistan use drugs, and some carry their habits back to the USSR.

- Religion is attracting increasing numbers of people, reinforcing anti-Russian nationalism among many ethnic groups, enhancing youth alienation even in major cities of the Russian heartland, and graphically demonstrating the failure of official ideology to compete with "vestiges of the past" for the hearts and minds of the Soviet population.

- The growth in the proportion of the non-Slavic population, the shrinking of available resources for allocation to competing regional groups, and the influence of external developments in Poland and Afghanistan on some nationalities have produced new sources of friction among ethnic groups.

- During the 1970s, emigration campaigns began among several religious and ethnic minorities—Germans, Pentecostals, Armenians, and Greeks, as well as Jews. A few dissident elements are advocating more radical tactics of protest, such as the formation of opposition groups with political action programs.

- Sporadic labor strikes, nationality demonstrations, and protests over food shortages have increased somewhat over the past decade—although the regime has in each instance been able to isolate the unrest and prevent its spread.

Over the past decade morale problems within the Soviet elite have also increased. Before Gorbachev's accession, many officials feared the party had grown so effete and preoccupied with preserving its privileges that it

had lost its ideological bearings and capacity for governing effectively. Problems within the elite in many respects parallel those within society as a whole:

- Some elite members exhibit a lower sense of social purpose than in the past, a weaker commitment to serving the party and the country as opposed to bureaucratic and especially private interests.

- The elite's vision of the Soviet future, to judge from reporting, has become gloomier. Many middle- and lower-level officials fear the economy is "played out" and seem more apprehensive about the potential for popular unrest than at any time since the period immediately following Stalin's death.

- Elite discipline eroded during Brezhnev's final years and during the brief tenures of the aged and ill Andropov and Chernenko, when many elites came to see the Politburo as a geriatric group out of touch with reality and lacking any long-range vision or strategy for dealing with accumulated problems.

Political and Economic Costs

Growing dissatisfaction within society and within the elite itself has had significant adverse consequences for the regime. The economic price is especially high:

- Disgruntled workers shirk their jobs to moonlight on more profitable second jobs in the unofficial economy. The absence of quality goods to purchase, combined with price controls and the trend toward wage leveling, has reduced the effectiveness of wage incentives.

- Rates of labor turnover are high. The low standard of living in many areas targeted for priority development makes it difficult to retain workers. Many young people "roam" from one unsatisfying job to another. The flight of the young and able bodied from dreary and impoverished villages has seriously depleted the rural work force.

- The shortage of housing and other amenities creates frustrations that contribute to a climbing divorce rate and a declining birth rate in Slavic areas, thus compounding the labor shortage.

- Alcohol abuse contributes to adverse demographic trends and is partly responsible for high rates of worker absenteeism and industrial accidents.

- Many man-hours are lost in the daily ordeal of shopping, yet the consumer's refusal to buy shoddy goods has led to a buildup of personal savings accounts and high inventory losses as unsalable goods accumulate.

The shift in popular and elite attitudes has potentially significant political implications. Mounting friction between different elements of the elite—both self-interested conflict over privilege and position, and bureaucratic debate over policy issues and resource allocations—have increased the chances that counterelites could emerge along institutional, generational, or ethnic lines. Moreover, with the widening of the spectrum of antisocial behavior, of private activities not sanctioned by the regime, and of unofficial mechanisms for "working" the system, the formal institutional structure has become less relevant to the average citizen's daily life:

- Some skilled workers who know their jobs are secure in a period of labor shortages have become less malleable and more inclined to "bargain" for improved working conditions by threatening to change jobs.

- In some respects, the second economy is undermining the official economy by creating a rival marketplace to which human and material resources are diverted. Although the second economy helps to satisfy consumer demand for products and services the official economy does not supply, it subverts centrally established priorities and challenges centralized control over prices and income distribution.

- Similarly, corruption robs the state coffers of revenue that passes to private hands and leads to the accumulation of personal fortunes. By providing lower-level officials with alternative sources of income, it makes them somewhat less dependent on privileges bestowed by the party, and consequently harder to keep in line. Corruption has also reduced the effectiveness of regime instruments of social control, such as the police.

Moscow must also contend with the possibility of increased manifestations of ethnic tension:

- Ethnic tensions in the military could somewhat impair troop reliability in future unpopular military interventions.

- Russian national feeling at some point could turn against the regime. Large numbers of Russian intellectuals disillusioned with what they see as the impoverishment of Soviet culture are attracted to the writings of emigres and conservative nationalist authors who oppose the party establishment.

- In some republics, especially in the Baltic area, the chances of a convergence of intellectual dissent and popular protest over economic deprivation and Russian domination has increased.

Prospects

Domestic problems are not likely to bring about economic collapse or political instability for the foreseeable future:

- In particular, the threshold of sustained, widespread, and coordinated mass unrest (as in Poland) will probably not be crossed. Spontaneous, large-scale localized disturbances—involving demonstrations, strikes, and violence—may well occur, but the regime will most likely be able to suppress them and to prevent any snowball effect.

- Within the top leadership, it is unlikely that conflict will emerge of such a serious nature as to bring into question the institutional mainstays, core beliefs, and party-dominated formula of the Soviet system. The very act of choosing a relatively young and activist leader as General Secretary indicates that the Politburo has not lost its will to rule or capacity for undertaking changes in order to preserve power.

- Unless the Kremlin blunders very badly or settles once again into a pattern of prolonged inertia, most officials within the broader elite will continue to see their interests best served by defending rather than abandoning the regime.

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Internal pressures, however, will exert a greater influence on regime policy than they have since the period immediately following Stalin's death. Top Soviet leaders seem increasingly aware that they cannot afford to ignore public opinion and increasingly concerned to redress what they see as negative trends in society and within segments of the elite.

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Soviet leaders for some time have been seriously concerned that conditions giving rise to popular discontent are growing stronger while regime instruments for maintaining social control and motivating the work force are growing weaker. Several international developments have fed these concerns:

- The Polish crisis of 1979-82 was an object lesson of major proportions, a wrenching experience that sent shock waves throughout the Soviet establishment. In Poland many Soviet elites saw a mirror of their own society. They saw that the shortcomings of the regime there bore a striking resemblance to deficiencies of the Soviet system and that the conditions that gave rise to unrest in Poland were similar in kind if not in degree to conditions in the USSR.

- Some Soviet officials believe the current US administration is attempting to undermine the USSR internally—by appealing to the Soviet population through radiobroadcasting and other "subversive" activities, by upping the ante in military spending, and by selective use of economic sanctions.

- Soviet officials are also worried that the war in Afghanistan is becoming a source of increased frustration within the elite and aggravating an array of problems in society—intensifying ethnic friction, feeding youth cynicism, leading to pervasive bribery to avoid the draft, damaging the regime's reputation, and heightening pessimism about the Soviet future.

While Soviet leaders since the late 1970s have been increasingly aware of domestic problems, they have not agreed among themselves on how best to deal with them. During most of his tenure, Brezhnev adopted a policy of relative indulgence toward key elements both of society and of the elite in an effort to reinforce passive popular compliance and elite satisfaction. He lowered performance standards and provided job security for party officials, avoided economic reforms that would threaten vested bureaucratic

interests, reinforced social security guarantees for workers, was relatively lenient in enforcing labor discipline, and permitted an expansion of de facto freedom in private affairs in exchange for political quiescence. He probably feared that more vigorous measures to redress internal problems could prove counterproductive, by stirring up popular criticism and heightening tensions within the elite.

Brezhnev's strategy of temporizing, however, fell into ever increasing disfavor among his Politburo colleagues. Andropov was critical of Brezhnev's approach, and Gorbachev even more so. Gorbachev has set for himself the ambitious objective of reviving Soviet Communism—by revitalizing the economy, the society, the ideology, and the party itself. Partly because his vision and aspirations are broader than Brezhnev's, he sees the same domestic situation in more alarming terms. He evidently believes that so many areas of Soviet life have slipped beyond direct regime regulation that an overall threat to control could develop, and that, even short of a threat to control, the economic costs of societal problems have become intolerable.

Given this diagnosis, it is not surprising that Gorbachev—building on initial steps taken by Andropov—has moved rapidly and aggressively in defining a coherent program for dealing with domestic problems. While he is avoiding sharp swings toward either repression or liberalization of the system, he is utilizing elements of both approaches in tackling accumulated social and economic ailments. His program is still in the developmental stage, but probable steps over the next several years include:

- Tightening labor discipline, increasing rewards for productive workers, and imposing heavier penalties on laggards.
- Employing even harsher measures against dissent and religious activism, while increasing radio jamming and taking other measures to limit Western influences on Soviet society.
- Further stiffening penalties for criminal offenses and upgrading the law enforcement apparatus.
- Attempting to shore up regime legitimacy and to combat popular cynicism by refining propaganda, appearing more responsive to public opinion, and more openly exploiting Russian nationalism as a prop to the system.

- Using personnel changes to tighten central control over the bureaucracy and to infuse the elite with younger and more competent individuals, while moving to reduce official corruption.
- Increasing efforts to indoctrinate youth through an educational reform, adopting a set of measures to bolster the family as a pillar of social stability, and continuing the campaign to restrict alcohol consumption.
- Attempting to improve the lot of the consumer through more efficient organization and a limited diversion of resources, while widening the scope for private economic activity somewhat.

If these policies are put into practice and pursued as vigorously as now seems likely, they will increase turbulence within society and within the elite. Within Soviet officialdom, powerful vested interests will resist Gorbachev's efforts, attempting to slow down the pace and limit the scope of change. Competition for prerogatives and position will be heightened by the replacement of older and less competent party workers with younger and better qualified men, the move to attack entrenched regional networks by giving more preferential treatment to Russian elites in non-Russian republics, the campaign against official corruption, and the limitations on job security. Shifts in resource allocation policy will pit bureaucracies against one another. The adoption of controversial new social policies such as the antialcohol campaign will intensify elite debate over whether a new course will disrupt the truce between state and society. Intensified moves to clean out and shape up the party ranks will strain internal party unity.

Within society, a tougher work ethic, stricter discipline, and more differentiated wages will strain relations at the workplace between high performers who stand to gain from greater inequality and low performers who stand to lose. Some types of economic reform, by undercutting worker job security and removing subsidies for basic commodities, could provoke labor strikes. Extremely repressive measures to tighten discipline could kill worker incentive. Ordinary citizens will find the campaigns against crime and economic illegality, alcoholism, religion, and draft dodging increasingly cutting into their personal lives and constraining their public behavior. The educational reform will be resented by those whose opportunities for upward social mobility are restricted by it. Intensified Russification may lead to more extreme forms of protest among disaffected minorities.

The degree to which the regime succeeds in implementing its strategy will depend to some extent on its ability to manage these conflicts and tensions. Essentially, the regime is putting a wager on the "strong" elements of both the elite and the society at large. Gorbachev is counting on the support of the most patriotic, sober, industrious, honest, and socially conservative

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citizens and officials, who combine an acceptance of authoritarian rule and a belief in the Soviet system with a concern to purge the country of "alien" influence and to make the economy more productive. Under Gorbachev's more dynamic leadership, the regime may be able to achieve some marginal upswing in economic performance, to arrest the erosion of instruments of control and mobilization, and perhaps to generate somewhat greater popular respect for the power and capabilities of the regime.

Even so, Soviet leaders will face continuing problems throughout the 1980s and beyond. Soviet societal problems are not merely "vestiges of the past" that have endured, but the results of fundamental contemporary conditions that the regime is unable or unwilling to alter. The growing sophistication of consumer demand is a natural consequence of the very process of economic modernization that the regime wants to further. The growing size of the critically thinking public is the result of expanded education, which is essential to the country's progress. The exposure of the population to external influences is partly because of technological advances in communications beyond the regime's control. Gorbachev's program will aggravate tensions in society and may create a problem of unfulfilled expectations.

Inherent weaknesses in the Gorbachev program—as well as the pressures and tensions produced by it—could lead the regime to take more extreme steps. Neither liberalization nor a return to some form of neo-Stalinist orthodoxy would be a panacea and, in fact, would entail even greater risk and conflict. Broad liberalization of the system would threaten the party's monopoly of political power and alienate the military. Most leaders would also view a sharp turn toward repression as politically disruptive, economically uncertain, and dangerous to them personally. Consequently, these more extreme policies would probably not become options unless the leadership decided domestic problems had reached crisis proportions.

It is by no means certain, however, which combination of policies the Gorbachev regime will adopt or how far change will reach. Some of the moves he has made thus far were unexpected, and further unconventional changes and surprises will probably follow.

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Domestic Stresses in the USSR

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Sources and Dimensions of Stress

Introduction

The Soviet regime of General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev faces serious political and social problems. Many of these problems have existed to some degree since the birth of the Soviet state and are inevitable in a system that represses individual liberties and places a higher priority on military power than on consumer welfare. They have deepened in recent decades under the impact of secular trends—the maturation of the economy, the growth of mass education, and the partial opening of society to outside influences.

During the past decade, domestic stresses became particularly pronounced. Adverse economic trends aggravated societal problems, and Brezhnev's basic approach to domestic policy made matters worse.

Brezhnev, reacting to the disruptive organizational and personnel changes of the Khrushchev years, adopted what might be called a laissez faire policy of relative indulgence toward key elements of both society and the elite. To pacify the elite, he lowered performance standards and provided job security for party officials, avoided economic reforms that would threaten vested bureaucratic interests, and attempted to balance the resource allocation demands of major institutional groups. To reinforce passive popular compliance, he maintained what has been called an unofficial social contract, whereby the population remained politically quiescent in exchange for the provision of material security and the toleration of a de facto expansion of private activities beyond the regime's purview in areas considered apolitical.

In trying to rectify Khrushchev's excesses, Brezhnev overcorrected and produced a "surplus of stability." In the relatively lax domestic environment of the 1970s, Soviet elite and society at large grew self-indulgent and soft by earlier standards. At the same time, as consumption growth tapered off and as the population became less isolated from the outside world, popular morale worsened. Erosion was evident in the regime's basic values and norms, the viability of its institutions, and the quality of executive authority. Decline in system vitality was manifested in a weakening of social discipline and a mounting of bureaucratic corruption and inertia. Neither Andropov nor Chernenko possessed the time, the political strength, or the stamina to mount a comprehensive program to arrest these negative trends in society and in the system, leaving the new Gorbachev leadership under increased pressure to come to grips with internal problems.

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The Economic Slowdown

Overall Growth Rates. During the Brezhnev years the Soviet economy continued its long-term trend of decelerating growth since World War II. Our calculations (based on 1970 factor costs) indicate that average annual growth of GNP dropped from 5.3 percent in the period 1966-70 to 3.7 percent during 1971-75 and to 2.6 percent in 1976-80. The slowdown was unusually sharp from 1979 to 1982, when GNP growth averaged only 1.6 percent per year.

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Since Brezhnev's death the economy's performance has been mixed. GNP grew by 3.6 percent in 1983 but by only 2 percent in 1984, due to a sharp drop in the rate of growth in agriculture. Disappointing farm output again held GNP growth in 1985 to about 2 percent. Industrial production in 1985 rose by more than 3 percent, slightly below the 1983-84 pace, but averaged nearly 4 percent during the last three quarters. A combination of better weather, improvements begun under Andropov, and such Gorbachev initiatives as increased discipline, personnel changes, and added workdays turned what began as a bad year for industry into a respectable performance. It remains to be seen whether the recent momentum can be sustained.

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Two fundamental factors will continue to constrain growth, as they have since the late 1970s. These are the slowing growth of the labor supply, rooted in demographic factors, and the rising costs of extracting, processing, and transporting raw materials. The Soviets can do little to ease these constraints during the remainder of the decade. The recent leadership decision to boost investment could have some impact on GNP growth, but its principal effects would fall in the 1990s. This is because of the lag in converting new fixed investment into plant and equipment, and because the existing capital stock is so immense and obsolescent that increments in investment would have to be very large to accelerate growth substantially through net additions to the capital stock.

Thus, although Soviet economic performance has improved in recent years from the low levels of growth of 1979-82, the economy cannot simultaneously maintain rapid growth in defense spending, satisfy demand for greater quantity and variety of consumer goods and services, invest the amounts required for economic modernization and expansion, and continue to support client-state economies. Gorbachev, in our view, has a clear understanding of these limitations, but the exact balance he will strike among competing resource claimants during the rest of the decade remains uncertain.

Declining Growth in Living Standards. The USSR has made significant improvements in consumer welfare in the post-Stalin period. During this time, real consumption per capita has nearly tripled. In overall nutritional terms the Soviet diet now nearly matches that in the United States, and most households have electrical appliances. But this growth has not been enough to offset the mounting demand for goods and services. As average income and expectations have risen, widespread gaps between the demand for consumer goods and their availability have become increasingly evident. Brezhnev's last year, 1982, was particularly bad; per capita expenditures on food, soft goods, and durables actually declined from their 1981 levels. From the point of view of the Soviet citizen, accustomed to rapid gains in the first two decades after World War II, the economy looked stagnant. many Soviet consumers have had the impression that their standard of living has remained the same or actually deteriorated since the late 1970s.

Indeed, one of the most serious casualties of the Soviet slowdown in overall growth has been consumption. After increasing by 4.3 percent per year in the late 1960s, by 2.6 percent per year during the first half of the 1970s, and by 1.8 percent per year during 1976-80, per capita consumption grew at an average annual rate of only 0.7 percent in 1981-82. Although it rebounded somewhat in 1983 and 1984, rising by 1.3 and 2.0 percent, respectively, per capita consumption slowed in 1985.[1] For the 1981-85 period as a whole, growth in consumption averaged only 1.3 percent per year. Moreover, if the recent upturn of the economy is not maintained, improvements in living standards for the rest of the 1980s will be harder to achieve. 25X1

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The most serious consumer problem is the food supply. According to Soviet data, the availability of quality foods increased sharply in the Soviet Union between 1965 and 1975, but a series of poor harvests checked this progress in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Shortages across the entire range of quality foodstuffs—meat, dairy products, and fruits and vegetables—were particularly acute in the 1980-82 period. Although supplies of starchy staples were always readily available, rationing was instituted in 1981 for the first time in several major Soviet cities. 25X1

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With the help of agricultural imports and better harvests in 1982 and 1983, food availability increased in 1983 but declined slightly in 1984 and 1985. Meat and milk output reached new highs in 1983 and again in 1984. Reporting of emigres indicates 25X1 that queuing declined somewhat, and, after earlier rapid increases, prices in the free collective farm markets leveled off. Overall, per capita consumption of food increased by somewhat less than 2 percent per year in 1983-84, after stagnating in 1982. Due to the agricultural shortfall and Gorbachev's antialcohol campaign, however, per capita food consumption declined somewhat in 1985. 25X1

[1] These growth rates are based on 1970 factor cost weights. Somewhat higher rates—by about one-tenth—generally result when consumption is measured in established prices. 25X1

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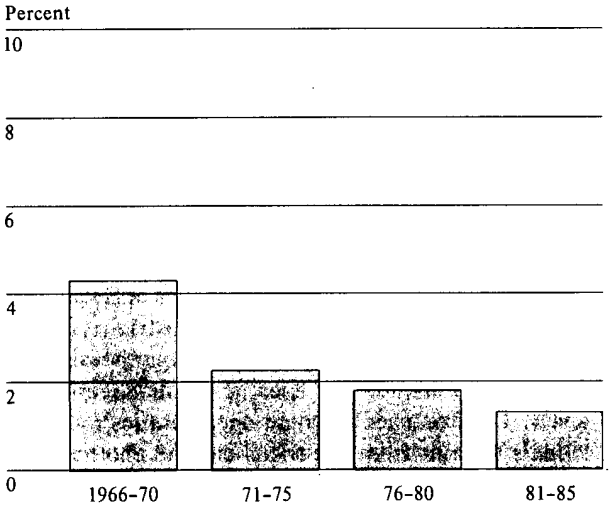
Figure 1
USSR: Average Annual Growth Rates in Per Capita Consumption



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Although the food problem does not seem to be getting worse, it is not getting appreciably better. Rising incomes continue to push up demand, especially for quality foods. Despite somewhat improved availability from increased production and continuing high levels of imports, food supplies remain taut, according to Soviet public statements.[2]

Housing is another critical area. Despite a continuing large construction program, an estimated 20 percent of city dwellers still share their living space with unrelated families or single persons. The Soviets appear to have ceased making progress on reducing communal apartments. The wait for an apartment can be as long as 10 years, although the average is substantially less. In general, living quarters are very cramped. In some of the republics the housing space per person is still below the minimum standard for "health and decency" that the Soviets set back in the 1920s.

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Conditions are worse in rural areas. Most urban housing comes equipped with electricity, indoor plumbing, hot water, gas, and central heating; but in rural areas the typical privately owned one-story wooden home still lacks indoor plumbing and central heating, although it now has electricity. According to published Soviet statistics for 1980, for example, only 38 percent of state-owned rural housing units in the Russian Republic were connected to central water supply systems and 22 percent to sewer lines; 26 percent had central heating. In both urban and rural areas, the quality of new construction in general is shoddy; for example, only approximately 40 percent of housing turned over for occupation in the Russian Republic each year is rated "satisfactory" or better.

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Health care, which had made substantial gains, now appears to be deteriorating. Moscow has been unwilling to devote a larger share of the budget to medical services, despite the increasing medical problems of an older, more urban, and more industrial population. The net result is that:

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- The USSR is the only major industrial nation in the world where the life expectancy now is lower than it was 20 years ago. Moscow stopped publishing these statistics in the early 1970s, but we estimate that since 1965 life expectancy for Soviet males has fallen from 66 years to 62 years. By contrast, in the United States it has risen from 67 to 71 years during the same period.

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- Death rates have risen significantly for every age group since the mid-1960s. Soviet infant mortality, which declined substantially between 1950 and 1970, rose by more than 50 percent during the 1970s, so that by 1980 it was the highest of any industrial society.

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[2] The strained economic situation continues to exacerbate the normal frustrations associated with everyday Soviet life—above all, the shopper's gauntlet to put food on the table. According to a study by the Institute for Sociological Research, reported in *Izvestiya* in February 1985, Soviet citizens spend 65 billion man-hours shopping each year or the equivalent of full-time employment of 35 million people. Moreover, 80 percent of that time is spent shopping for food.

- Morbidity rates for five communicable diseases—diptheria, hepatitis, scarlet fever, whooping cough, and measles—are increasing sharply. The growing problems of combating infectious diseases in the Soviet armed forces led to a January 1984 announcement of the formation of "extraordinary antiepidemic commissions" in all military units and on ships.

- In December 1985 Moscow publicly acknowledged that the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, or AIDS virus, exists in the USSR. The USSR's difficulty in controlling communicable diseases, its lack of modern medical equipment such as disposable needles, and its reportedly poor screening of blood supplies increase the country's vulnerability to a spread of the disease beyond the high-risk group identified in the United States.

Deficient health care thus has a negative effect on demographic trends and consequently on manpower shortages. Soviet demographers have recently indicated to their American counterparts that the quality of health care has for this reason begun to receive wide attention from state planning officials.

Everyday personal services that make life livable are the backwater of the Soviet economy. Workers providing such consumer services constitute only a fraction of the state-employed labor force and are among the lowest paid and most poorly trained. Private contractors who moonlight take up some of the slack, but they lack a legal and regular flow of supplies and are unable to hire labor to assist them.

The USSR has made little progress toward its officially announced goal of surpassing the US standard of living. Over the last two decades, real Soviet per capita consumption inched up relative to that in the United States, but it is still only about one-third the US level. Living standards in the USSR remain low by Western standards and even compare unfavorably with those in much of Eastern Europe. 25X1

Social Mobility and Stratification. With the maturation and slowing of the economy and the "stability of cadres" policy of the Brezhnev regime, class lines have been hardening and opportunities for upward mobility shrinking. In the early decades of Soviet rule, changes in social structure, rapid industrialization, the Stalin purges, and World War II manpower losses created huge numbers of openings at managerial levels. The existence of broad opportunities for individuals to vault from one social class to another softened the deprivations suffered by those at the bottom level of society. Today, as one Soviet publication acknowledged, "the times for soaring careers are past." The expansion of education without a concomitant expansion of employment opportunities has produced a large number of disgruntled specialists unable to find jobs in their fields of expertise. 25X1 25X1 25X1

The whole society has become more highly stratified, with everyone placed in a particular category of privilege or deprivation. At some factories, for example, employees may order meat and other commodities unavailable in state stores. High party officials are entitled to shop at special stores closed to the general public, where stocks of imported and scarce goods are sold at relatively low prices. Housing, especially, is allocated on the basis of employment, bureaucratic position, personal connections, and bribery. Moreover, low mobility in the leadership system and the ability of its members to secure education and positions for their children have given the privileged elite some characteristics of a hereditary aristocratic class. 25X1 25X1 25X1

The wealth gap between income groups in the USSR has widened. According to Western scholars, inequality of Soviet wages declined after World War II until the late 1960s. In the last decade, however, this trend was checked, and inequality in pay may have increased. According to the results of two independent surveys of emigres (mostly Jewish) who left the USSR in the early and late 1970s, respectively, inequality of household income (from public and private jobs) was probably greater in 1979 than in 1973 or in 1968. Moreover, total wealth (including possessions and savings) is even more unequally distributed in the USSR than wages and household income. A survey of 2,800 Soviet households who recently emigrated to the United States suggests that for the Soviet population as a whole by the end of the 1970s:

- Thirty percent of households had no savings.
- Forty-five percent of all savings were in the hands of the top 10 percent of households.
- Five percent of households received 25 percent of total income, while 20 percent of households garnered nearly half the income.
- Twenty-five percent of the population owned two-thirds of the total wealth.

Consumer shortages, of course, have affected some groups of the population more adversely than others. Peasants and many workers have been hit harder than the privileged elites, who have access to special stores and services. The welfare of elderly pensioners, the sick and disabled, and women with dependent children has particularly suffered.

Shift in the Mood of the Population

Because of these and other factors, the mood of the Soviet population shifted in the late Brezhnev period. The optimism of the 1960s and early 1970s gave way to a deep social malaise. A plethora of anecdotal material and survey results suggests that there was a feeling of life going stale and sour for many. Both pessimism about the future and dissatisfaction with the present condition of Soviet society fed the negative mood. With the recent rebound of the economy and Gorbachev's coming to power, public morale has generally improved. Yet, it remains to be seen how lasting the upswing in the mood of the Soviet elite and populace will be. The basic problems and objective conditions at the root of domestic ills have been building for years and are not amenable to quick fixes.

This does not yet mean that regime control is threatened. To a considerable extent, the population's memory of the purge years serves as a restraint on unorthodox behavior. Many people, either as a result of experience or socialization within the family, retain an instinctive fear of the police that inhibits nonconformity. But, at the same time, the political and psychological leverage of the regime over the population has weakened. The inclination to cheat or get around the system is pervasive, and little penalty is expected short of the most provocative behavior. Many citizens, especially youth who did not live through the Stalin era, are criticizing domestic conditions more openly than in the past. Preliminary findings of the Soviet Interview Project suggest that the young are not only the most disaffected but are also less fearful of police authority and less inhibited in complaining about regime shortcomings than are the older generations. 25X1

Discontent Over the "Quality of Life." The Soviet population has historically exhibited a high level of endurance of material deprivation, but expressions of popular discontent over a perceived decline in the quality of life have increased in recent years—according to emigre reports, journalists, embassy contacts, 25X1

workers in the past 25X1
would sometimes voice complaints and cynicism in 25X1
public when drunk but now frequently do so when sober. Consumer dissatisfaction represents an especially serious challenge for the Politburo, because 25X1
improvements in popular welfare have been the regime's most important basis of legitimacy since Stalin's death in 1953. 25X1

Most important, over the past several years the evidence suggests that the Soviet population has perceived trends in living standards as being even more negative than they actually have been. The primary reason for this may be that the current slowdown in consumption growth was preceded by

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A Soviet Survey of Public Attitudes on Living Standards

A major survey conducted by the Institute of Sociological Research of the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1981-82—but not reported on in Soviet open sources until 1985—dealt with popular perceptions of living conditions. The survey was based on a sample of 10,500 adults in eight republics. Although the Soviet media did not indicate the number of nonrespondents or whether the sample was random—factors that could affect the results significantly—the survey was said to have shown that three-fourths of those polled believed they were better off than they had been five years earlier, but one-fourth thought that their living standard had not improved at all during this period.

The poll indicated satisfaction was relatively higher among collective farm workers and other low-income citizens, suggesting that discontent was relatively greater among better educated citizens and those who live in urban areas. The previously mentioned survey of 2,800 Soviet emigres—conducted by the Soviet Interview Project centered at the University of Illinois—also revealed that city dwellers and middle-class citizens—whose attitudes are more important to the regime—were relatively more unhappy with their lot.

In addition, the 1981-82 Soviet survey reported that 45 percent of the respondents felt that their diet had not improved during the preceding five years. Many Soviet citizens have also become dissatisfied with working conditions. Data published in Soviet scholarly studies indicate considerable discontent not only about wage levels but also about infrastructural conditions—the quality of housing available at many job sites, poor dining facilities at factories, inadequate child-care facilities, the absence of safety precautions, and hazardous environmental factors (radiation, chemicals, pollution).

more rapid advances in the 1960s and early 1970s. The progress of the Khrushchev and early Brezhnev years and the ambitious goals for further progress that the regime publicized (including the party's 1961 pledge to attain the world's highest living standard by 1980) stimulated popular expectations beyond the regime's capacity to satisfy them. When consumption growth tapered off, many citizens apparently believed the downturn was absolute rather than relative. The sense that the material circumstances of life were stagnating or deteriorating led to disillusionment among different elements of the population in the period up to Gorbachev's election,

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In many cases, dissatisfaction with living conditions is compounded by a loss of faith in the ability to rise into a higher social class through hard work. As the gap has widened between the occupational ambitions of Soviet youth and the capacity of the system to satisfy them, many young people have become demoralized. The "shattering" of career plans, in the words of one leading Soviet sociologist, contributes to "attitudes of skepticism" and a "weakening of belief in ideals."

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A Leningrad Teenager's Views on Soviet Life

A Soviet in her late teens described to Leningrad Consulate officials in February 1985 the range of citizens' reactions to the poor quality of Soviet life and their methods of coping with it.

Many turn to drink and drugs "to deaden somehow the dead-end feeling and the sense of our impotence." Most adults—unlike Soviet youth—have already learned to adapt in order to survive. Many have simply stopped paying any attention to the moral degradation, being surrounded with the daily cares of existence—of which there are more than enough. Moreover, it is so much simpler and easier to accept rather than fight the situation. As she explained, "Why worry yourself with problems you can't solve? We only live once and it is better to live it in satisfaction than to go through moral and physical suffering for the sake of some kind of justice."

The source said "thinking" Soviets have it much worse than the rest. She described their reaction and plight as follows:

> When you see yourself surrounded only by "filth," you cannot possibly feel satisfied and happy. Having recognized and rejected the hypocrisy and mercenary relations between people that arise in such a false society, we cannot also live the same life. Having taken up a stand in opposition to society, we are condemned to solitude.
>
> We do not believe in Communism, and we were never taught another "religion." Each of us tries somehow to shut out reality, to forget, to distract ourselves. We build our own world, within ourselves, the kind we would like to see. We live in this world and are happy only there.
>
> Unfortunately, we are so frightened, and separated by distrust from one another, that only a few of us are capable of fighting openly. I would so much like to believe in a bright future for my country—but where will I find the strength to believe in anything at all?

Moreover, workers may have developed a greater degree of working-class consciousness. A reportedly confidential study (the so-called Novosibirsk Report) for the Kremlin leadership by a group of reform-minded Soviet economists in the Academy of Sciences, leaked to the Western press in 1983, indicated workers have become acutely aware of their interests and inclined to "stand up for themselves." Emigre testimony and Soviet data on industrial conflict point to greater assertiveness in particular among young, skilled manual workers and worker-technicians who along with white-collar professionals make up the "new" Soviet working middle class. Like their parents, second-generation blue-collar workers take for granted the old security-oriented rights—guaranteed jobs, a minimum wage, and welfare benefits. But to a far greater extent than their parents they also demand more interesting jobs, better wages, and higher living standards—expectations typical of a better educated generation raised in a climate of promises of plenty.

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Popular dissatisfaction with the quality of life has had a negative impact on the Soviet economy:

- In various ways, dissatisfaction with the living standard lowers economic productivity. City dwellers take long lunch hours to shop, for example, in order to avoid longer lines after working hours. People from the countryside clog the transportation network by traveling to cities to shop on the weekend.

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- Consumer discontent also contributes indirectly to demographic problems. Soviet studies indicate that the housing shortage discourages large families. The difficult life of Soviet women—who must cope with inadequate nurseries and a paucity of labor-saving devices, as well as the onerous burden of shopping—creates frustrations that contribute to a climbing divorce rate, a declining birthrate, and a trend toward the breakdown of the family in Slavic areas.

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- The consumer's refusal to buy shoddy goods, combined with the regime's fear of the social consequences of raising prices on heavily subsidized basic commodities, leads to imbalances in the consumer goods market. The chronic shortages of some highly desired goods and services, as well as serious problems in product mix and quality, have contributed to lackluster performance by Soviet workers. The typical Soviet citizen must still work to live, but harder work is not likely to lead to a proportionate gain in well-being when the desired better quality goods are not available.

Although such consumer problems and economic inefficiencies are not new to the Soviet scene, and indeed may not have worsened dramatically in recent years, the leadership may view them as more costly to the system in terms of the losses of increasingly scarce labor resources. For example, extensive lines for consumer goods and services have long been a characteristic feature of the Soviet system. However, the losses of worktime, while perhaps no greater than before relative to total hours worked, have become more costly now that there is only slow growth in the labor force and the regime has proclaimed itself increasingly dependent on increases in labor productivity for improvements in economic growth. In a similar vein, the impact of the housing situation on birthrates may have assumed a higher cost in recent years as the labor shortage has raised the marginal cost of each additional unit of labor.

In some ways, however, the effects of consumer problems may make it easier for the regime to control the population. Many people spend so much time dealing with the inconveniences and hardships of the daily "rat race" that they have no time or energy to get involved in active dissent. Moreover, the overproduction of specialists and the resulting tight job market for professionals have increased the intelligentsia's dependence on the regime, which can deny a professional job to anyone whose behavior is suspect.

Materialism, Privatism, and Ideological Cynicism. The fact that many people have not internalized Marxist-Leninist ideology does not necessarily render it ineffectual as an instrument of external control. Ideology continues to serve the function of defining the limits of legitimate political discussion. Whether the population accepts the official belief system, most people recognize the necessity of formal adherence to the ideology. 25X1

Nonetheless, over the past decade ideology has atrophied as a tool to galvanize social energies. The Brezhnev regime abandoned Khrushchev's ideological reformism and his attempt to establish a bond between the party and the people based on a broad set of popular values. It sought a narrower legitimacy based more exclusively on attention to the population's material well-being. This made it difficult for the regime to ask the population to sacrifice for the sake of lofty ideological considerations once the economic growth slowdown decreased the regime's capacity to deliver on its promises to consumers. 25X1 25X1

A wide assortment of evidence indicates that most Soviet citizens today consider official ideology irrelevant to their daily lives. Saturating the media with the party line undoubtedly has a cumulative impact on the thinking of many citizens, but there is also considerable cynicism about regime propaganda and even questioning among some about whether the regime represents a perversion of true socialism. The vision of Communism as a final social goal is no longer taken seriously. One emigre described the attitudes of Soviet young people: "They neither fight against Communism, argue against it, nor curse it; something much worse has happened to Communism: they laugh at it." 25X1 25X1

The loss of idealism is most evident in the growth of what the regime denounces as "consumerism." As a Soviet contact of the US Consulate in Leningrad observed in February 1985, material well-being has become the meaning of existence for many, and the basic desire is "to be no worse off than anyone else." According to the Soviet press, "property-loving consciousness" and the chase after consumer goods have been elevated to a "cult of things" symptomatic of a "petit bourgeois" psychology. Soviet society increasingly exhibits the attitudes of both a me generation and a now generation. In this regard the evidence suggests that the population in general has no desire to postpone the satisfaction of material desires in the name of a tomorrow no one any longer believes in. 25X1 25X1

Figure 2. Queuing up for food in Moscow.

Newsweek ©

As disillusionment with regime promises has increased, large numbers of Soviet citizens—within the working class, middle class, and even officialdom—in effect have "dropped out" of political activities. They divert their energies and ambitions into more rewarding private concerns—their families, leisure, and material well-being—and pursuits not sanctioned by the regime, such as religion.

Low Worker Morale. The malaise of society is also reflected in increasingly negative attitudes toward work. The 1983 Novosibirsk Report cited above said the "common qualities" of the worker produced by the Soviet system were "low labor and production discipline, an indifferent attitude toward work, low quality of work, social inertia, a well-pronounced consumer mentality, and a low code of morality." This decription matched that provided by exiled Russian writer Alexander Zinoviev, who said that "Communist society is a society of people who work badly."

In particular, now more than in the past, people want to avoid physical labor. In the world's first "workers' state," virtually no one wants to be a worker or peasant. According to Soviet studies conducted in 1980, 94 percent of 10th graders sought to continue full-time higher education rather than getting a job. Soviet sociological surveys on youth attitudes in 1984 indicate that "young peoples' perceptions of what they will be in the future sometimes convey a romantic character and do not correspond to the needs of production."

More generally, Soviet sociological data indicate that occupational choice in the USSR has been increasingly shaped by concern for an easy job in a location with relatively high living standards. Surveys conducted in the 1970s and 1980s indicated people were becoming less interested in the job itself or the prestige it offered, while various occupational conditions and access to semilegal or even illegal deficit goods and services were becoming more important factors in job attractiveness. 25X1 25X1

Alienation from work and laziness on the job are to a large extent due to an ineffective system of economic rewards and penalties. Under Brezhnev, the regime virtually guaranteed even unproductive workers jobs and wages sufficient to buy basic necessities, while a trend toward wage leveling reduced incentives to work hard. Many workers take the view that there is little point in exerting themselves because the basics of food and shelter are cheap and the luxuries that could be bought with extra money are largely unavailable anyway. Thus, many idle along, doing just enough to stay out of trouble and demonstrating the accuracy of the quip that "they pretend they're paying us and we pretend we're working." 25X1 25X1

the Soviet wage system had reached such a state of crisis that ambition and effort on the job had radically declined. Indeed, the results of a nationwide public opinion poll, published in *Izvestiya* on 3 May 1985, revealed that only 25 to 35 percent of the 10,150 questioned workers claimed they made a consistent effort to do their jobs as well as they could. 25X1 25X1

At the same time, the shortage of labor has led to greater demands for improved working conditions on the part of skilled workers who know they cannot easily be replaced. *Izvestiya,* discussing the problem of labor discipline, quoted one skilled worker: "You can't scare me. . . . There's no sense trying to influence me with threats. That would be all right if there were 10 unemployed workers standing in line for a job—then fear is the best teacher."

Poor labor discipline also finds expression in high worker absenteeism. One significant cause of absenteeism is the inconvenient shopping hours kept by Soviet stores and other retail outlets. Such businesses often are closed during the lunch hour and in the evenings. Because in the large majority of Soviet families both husband and wife work full-time, many people—women in particular—are left with no alternative but to slip away from their desks and workbenches during working hours if they are to keep their families fed and clothed. The result, according to Soviet statistics, is that for every 100 workers there are 30 incidents of absenteeism every day. Each period of absence averages 1.6 hours. Before Andropov launched his worker discipline campaign, an investigation carried out in Moscow Oblast, for example, found that in some factories and offices no more than 10 percent of the workers were at their workplaces during the final hour of their shift, and that throughout the region 73 percent of the work force regularly took time off during working hours to take care of personal business.

Worker dissatisfaction produces high rates of labor turnover and internal migration. The party's theoretical journal *Kommunist* in March 1983 reported that over 20 million Soviet workers—one out of every five workers—were changing their jobs every year. At the same time, the secretary of the Moscow city Komsomol committee noted in a Soviet youth newspaper that, nationwide, 60 percent of those quitting their jobs were young people. "In effect," he wrote, "such people are voting with their feet." Though labor turnover is not new and, indeed, may not have worsened seriously over the past decade, leadership concern about such behavior has risen.

Soviet economists regard much of this turnover to be economically counterproductive; they state that people are moving out of areas that suffer from manpower shortages and into areas that have labor surpluses. In particular, it is precisely new projects in remote areas targeted for priority development that lack the housing facilities and consumer conveniences needed to induce workers to remain on the job. Managers in such new industrial areas complain that "people are running away" and worry about finding ways to "fix the personnel." Many young people, disdainful of blue-collar jobs and reluctant to accept conditions that older people are willing to endure, "roam" from one low-level and unsatisfying job to another. Moreover, the flight of the young and able bodied from dreary and impoverished villages has seriously depleted the rural work force and produced in the cities a lower working class whose members frequently become involved in crime or other antisocial behavior.

Youth Alienation. Official surveys, together with emigre reports, indicate that large segments of Soviet youth are especially disenchanted with work, bored with life, alienated from the political system, immersed in private concerns, and driven by material interests. A major Western study undertaken after World War II, which attempted to gauge Soviet public attitudes on the basis of interviews with large numbers of people who left the USSR during the war, concluded that Soviet young people were more favorably disposed toward the regime than their parents. Preliminary results from a similar project based on the briefing of large numbers of Soviet citizens who emigrated during the 1970s and 1980s indicate that the opposite is true today. Soviet youth are less inclined than their parents to have a favorable attitude toward the regime. Never having experienced the ravages of Stalinism or the ordeals of World War II, they are less tolerant of current regime shortcomings. However, emigre data also indicate that there is relatively higher acceptance by the "new generation" of Soviet foreign policies and pride in its superpower status.

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In a poll conducted by *Sotsialisticheskaya industriya* in February 1982, Soviet youth clearly indicated the high priority they place on a stable career and material comfort. Success was defined by 34 percent of the respondents as the "quantity and prestige of their possessions," such as a new car or a summer house, and not as contributions to the "collective welfare."

Youth alienation is manifested not only in the preoccupation with accumulating material possessions but also in the involvement of large numbers of young people in various types of deviance and delinquency—drugs, prostitution, drifting, draft dodging, the rock culture, black-market trafficking, even Hare Krishna. Soviet authorities have expressed concern that youth are increasingly rejecting marriage in favor of a more carefree lifestyle. In short, there is a growing gap between the outlook and behavior of youth and official Soviet mores.

Recently, there have been indications of increased regime attention to problems of extreme depression among youth.

Youth alienation, however, frequently takes forms that are—from the regime's standpoint—innocuous. Sports, for example, provide a major diversion that enables many bored youth to "let off steam" and keeps them from turning to nonconformist behavior.

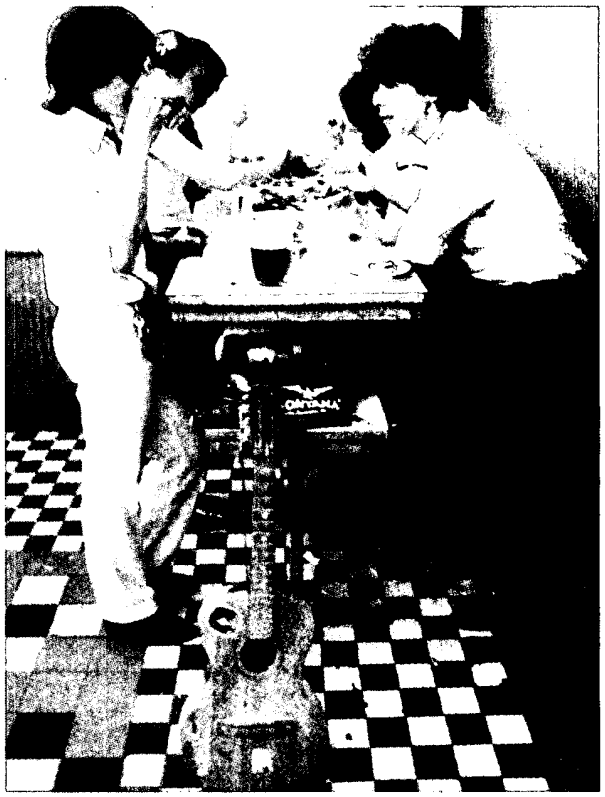

Figure 3. Drifting through a day-to-day existence, teenagers quaff beer at a Moscow pub. Time ©

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Social Pathologies

In recent years the spectrum of antisocial behavior—alcoholism, crime, corruption—has widened, demonstrating that some areas of social life are slipping beyond regime control. The growing scale of illegal economic activity also reflects erosion of political regulation of important sectors of economic life. Soviet society as a whole has become less cohesive and disciplined.

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Mass Corruption. Corruption has long been a fact of life within the Soviet bureaucratic elite, but under Brezhnev it became a mass phenomenon enveloping society from top to bottom.

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Whether or not these assessments are exaggerated, it is clear that corruption so permeates everyday life that the ordinary citizen typically finds himself unable to avoid theft and bribery in procuring even basic necessities, such as food, housing, and medical care.

"the list of situations in which the *homo sovieticus* is forced to resort to bribery is as inexhaustible as life itself, from a bed in a maternity ward to a cemetery plot." Even in prisons and labor camps, one can get almost anything for a bribe,

The rampant scale of corruption is connected with the growth of the second economy, which also came into full bloom in the Brezhnev period. Because the official economy has failed to provide sufficient quantities of goods and services, many Soviet citizens have turned to private enterprise to advance their personal welfare and interests. In fact, the findings of the Soviet Interview Project indicate that those not engaging in private economic activity—because of conscience or lack of skills—may find themselves impoverished. The survey found that the wealthiest citizens supplement their state-set salaries with income from private work. These include doctors and dentists with private practices, college-level teachers who tutor on the side, and drivers who take money for private trips. Overall, the hourly personal income return on private economic activity was eight times that in the state sector in 1979, and for doctors the ratio was 42 to 1 for the relevant categories included in the survey.

A large percentage of certain types of economic activity may be conducted on the black market.

in late 1982 estimated that some 30 percent of the labor force under the age of 30 in the republic of Azerbaijan had opted to get out of the regular economy. A recent *Izvestiya* article reported that 17-20 million people were moonlighting as repairmen and that they accounted for about half of all shoe repairs, 45 percent of apartment remodeling, 40 percent of car repairs, and 30 percent of household appliance repairs. Illegal speculation (the purchase and resale of goods for profit) is now so widespread that as much as two-thirds of the population is probably involved,

more than 60 percent of the some 300,000 prisoners in Moscow jails today are there because of economic crimes, ranging from overcharging customers to operating underground private factories to stealing state property.

The sheer scale and openness of corruption both reflect and feed the popular attitude that many forms of corruption are normal, even legitimate. In a January 1985 *Izvestiya* interview, a Soviet legal expert acknowledged that a defensive reaction—"That's what everybody does"—has taken hold among the population at large. Moreover, according to emigre reporting, skillful maneuvering in the complicated system of commercial crimes and activities evokes from some members of society "praise of the businessman." Successful speculators appear to be popular and respected for their talents.

Stealing from the state, in particular, has virtually become a matter of course and is not regarded by the public as a criminal act. Soviet sociological data indicate that practically all Soviet workers pilfer from their enterprises, and it is extremely rare that one will blow the whistle on another. A survey of Moscow workers, reported in a 1983 Soviet publication, found that nearly 80 percent opposed punishment for pilfering from state enterprises.

***Figure 4.** Ripping off the state. Virtually everyone steals from the state, a phenomenon captured by this Soviet cartoon of workers ripping off a factory. The caption reads: "Working would be so dull if it wasn't for this safety valve!"*

Bribes—long a fixture of the Soviet scene—have also come to be viewed by the public as an effective method of "working the system." In a series of interviews conducted with Soviet emigrants in 1977, nearly half of those questioned selected "bribery, pull, or connections" as the most effective way of solving problems. A similar response was obtained in 1984 from more recent emigres. By the same token, *Izvestiya* in January 1985 noted that the word "moonlighter," originally a pejorative term, has lost much of its negative meaning. During a May 1985 visit to Leningrad, Gorbachev himself noted that, if someone wanted his apartment repaired, he would have to find a moonlighter to do the job.

Until recently, the Soviet regime was reluctant to attempt a crackdown on mass corruption. The leadership has tolerated illegal economic activity partly because it recognizes that the second economy plays a vital role in making available desired goods and services that the state economy cannot or will not provide. Up to a point, the black market helps to relieve the inefficiencies of the system and keep it running.

This toleration has not been cost free, however. The existence of the "second economy" subverts centrally established priorities and challenges centralized control over prices, income distribution, and allocation of manpower and capital. To some extent, growth of the second or black economy over time could generate new sources of economic and political power. 25X1

Moreover, since much of ordinary Soviet life is enveloped in vast areas of illegality, the whole concept of crime has become blurred. Soviets in conversations with US diplomats and Western correspondents have suggested that Soviet society is moving toward a moral vacuum and a weakening of ethical norms and legal rules to regulate individual behavior. The general atmosphere fostered by corruption—of doing things on the dark side of the law and getting away with it—fuels the growth of other forms of criminal behavior. 25X1

Crime. Indeed, crime of all kinds is on the rise in the Soviet Union, according to emigre reports and Soviet public statements. a persistent criminal subculture—in effect, a criminal class—has developed in Soviet society. the rate of repeat offenses among those who commit major felonies exceeds 50 percent. Crime reporting in the Soviet media has stepped up significantly over the past two years, in contrast to the situation 10 years ago, when Soviet newpapers rarely reported crimes and never gave any general statistics on their frequency. 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1

Although crime in the USSR is probably not on a level with that in the United States, the situation has worsened in almost every category:

- The number of murders has sharply increased, and the proportion of murders committed without any known motive has reportedly now risen to 80 percent, 25X1 25X1 25X1

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- there has been a steady rise in the number of armed robberies of big stores, jewelry shops, banks, and couriers delivering wages to big enterprises.

- Groups and individuals, often operating with home-made weapons, hammers, or knives, roam the streets of some cities and rob people on paydays, according to emigre reporting.

- Embassy contacts and emigres report a rise in apartment break-ins has caused managers of apartment houses in Moscow and other major cities to begin putting in burglar alarm systems and city residents to install locks on their apartment doors, something never seen a decade ago.

- Juvenile crime—both property offenses and violent crime—has become especially serious.

persons under 18 were responsible for more than half the crimes committed in the Baltic region. Furthermore, more than 50 percent of teenage crimes are committed by groups. Emigre data and Soviet open sources indicate organized youth gangs of street toughs are proliferating in the newly built-up areas on the outskirts of large cities.

Crime has especially increased in the developing cities of the far east and far north, where the social infrastructure is weak and living standards are low. The crime rate is higher in these areas also because many ex-convicts are denied residence permits in the largest cities of the western USSR and are forced to resettle in the remote cities of Siberia after completing their terms of forced labor. In provincial regions and agricultural communities, the lack of social life contributes to rowdyism, especially among youth. Emigre reporting indicates that anti-Russian nationalism also contributes to crime. In the Baltic area, for example, some youth crime is directed at Russian citizens.

The regime's failure to prevent the rise in crime has political implications. Soviet citizens have always placed a high premium on personal security and have taken pride in the fact that the Soviet state protected its citizens by keeping the streets safe. Soviet propaganda—which portrays the United States as a violent, degenerate, and morally bankrupt society where criminals prey at will on the population at large—has traditionally claimed that strong law and order is an inherent advantage socialism enjoys over the "anarchy" of capitalist countries. This propaganda may have lost some of its force.

Alcoholism. Alcohol abuse, Russia's national pastime and historical plague, had assumed alarming—possibly critical—dimensions before Gorbachev's recent crackdown on drinking of alcoholic beverages. The Soviet Union ranks first in the world in the per capita consumption of hard liquor, which has a more pernicious impact on health and society than do beer and wine. According to Western estimates, per capita alcohol consumption in the USSR has more than doubled over the past 25 years.

Available data from a broad range of Soviet open sources, emigres, Western newsmen, depict the alcohol problem as enormous:

- the Central Statistical Administration in early 1985 found more than 8 percent of Soviet adults to be clinically alcoholic.

- A member of the Novosibirsk-based Siberian branch of the Academy of Sciences claimed in a temperance lecture in 1984 that in 1980 some 40 million Soviet citizens—or one out of every six—were offically registered as alcoholics or drunkards and estimated that by the year 2000 this figure will double.[5]

[5] Unfortunately, do not define clearly these various classifications—"clinically diagnosed alcoholics," "registered alcoholics," or "drunkards"—or explain the statistics assigned to them. In general, terminology and quantitative measures dealing with alcohol consumption tend to be very loosely used and abused by the Soviets.

The Consequences of Alcohol Abuse

According to Soviet open sources, chronic, widespread abuse of alcohol has especially serious consequences in four main areas:

- Health. *Alcoholism contributes to the rising Soviet death rate and declining male life expectancy. The number of deaths from alcohol poisoning is estimated to be 100 times the US rate. Medical and sociological experts emphasize the relationship between alcoholic mothers and the rise in infant mortality as well as the increase in birth defects. According to the Moscow Psychiatric Research Institute, one-third of all children born to alcoholic mothers are mentally retarded.*

- Family stability. *Alcoholism is cited as the leading factor in the rise in the divorce rate in the USSR. A recent study by the respected Soviet demographer Viktor Perevedentsev found that nearly half of all divorces initiated by women are on the grounds of their husbands' drunkenness. A Soviet newspaper article published in late 1984 reported that 65 percent of registered women alcoholics are divorced. Traditionally, Soviet women have provided the ballast in the family. With the increase in female heavy drinking, a stabilizing social force has been weakened.*

- Crime. *A recent report in* Izvestiya *stated that more than half of all crimes in the USSR are committed by intoxicated people, including 90 percent of the cases of hooliganism, 80 percent of robberies, and 75 percent of all murders and reported rapes. Drinking contributes to juvenile delinquency and, eventually, to adult crime. In February 1985 the All-Union Institute for the Study of the Causes of Crime reported in a Soviet journal that nearly three-fourths of all lawbreakers are people who started drinking between the ages of 14 and 17.*

- Low labor productivity. *Heavy and pervasive drinking on the job is responsible for losses in productivity, reduced quality of output, and high turnover of personnel. A Soviet scientist, who lectured on temperance in Novosibirsk in 1984, calculated alcohol-related losses to the economy as four times greater than the 45 billion rubles of annual revenue that alcohol sales bring in. A Soviet journal has reported that drinking on the job reduces productivity up to 30 percent. Every fourth industrial accident in the Soviet Union is the result of drinking, as are approximately 37 percent of all traffic fatalities. In November 1984 a party journal reported that 60 percent of unlawful absences from work are because of alcohol abuse. Alcohol consumption also contributes to manpower problems by lowering birthrates, especially in Slavic areas.*

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- A Western expert, citing Soviet data, reported that in 1979 12 to 15 percent of the adult urban population was processed through sobering-up stations, as a result of arrest for public drunkenness. The Soviet Minister of Internal Affairs, Vitaliy Fedorchuk, noted in a 1983 *Pravda* article that 800,000 Soviets lost their driver's licenses in 1982 because they were drunk when stopped by police.

- Soviet data indicate that alcoholism is growing among children. The Soviet newpaper *Rural Life* in December 1983 reported that the average age of alcoholics has dropped by five to seven years during the past decade, and that one-third of all registered alcoholics began drinking before they were 10 years old.

- Other articles reveal the spread of alcoholism among women as well. Various estimates indicate that between 10 and 15 percent of Soviet alcoholics are now women.

- The newspaper *Molodoy Kommunist* recently reported that more than one-third of the male work force is chronically drunk. As many as 85 percent of the workers in Soviet factories regularly drink too much. A Moscow journal in July 1985 reported the results of a recent Soviet survey of industrial workers in which half of the respondents said they drink before work, and 20 percent of the men and 12 percent of the women said they drink on the job.

Up to a point, alcohol consumption functions as a kind of safety valve for pent-up social discontent. the leadership until recently, under Gorbachev, has tolerated excessive drinking in the belief that it keeps the people docile and that, without a bottle in which to drown their frustrations, popular resentment about living conditions would find active release in more open forms of hostility toward the regime. described the regime's attitude: "It is better that they be alcoholics than revolutionaries."

Figure 5. *Soviet media emphasize alcohol's heavy toll on the family. This* Krokodil *cartoon depicts a drunk father as "a stranger within his own family." Alcohol abuse is also cited as the leading factor in the rise of the Soviet divorce rate.*

Indeed, it appears that the most common reason for drinking is boredom and a desire to escape from the drudgery of Soviet life. People turn to alcohol to fill the hours in which there is a lack of alternative means of recreation, including the use of leisure time to purchase desirable consumer durables. Alcohol helps the average citizen cope with overcrowded apartments and the lack of prospects to improve his lot in life. Above all, drunkenness is endemic to the countryside where the quality of life is most dismal. Emigres and US Embassy officers report that rural stores frequently have almost no food or merchandise for sale but always have plenty of vodka. According to emigre reporting, more than half of the revenues in some small towns and cities—like Gatchina near Leningrad—is generated by alcohol sales.

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But many Soviets—especially the leadership—are becoming increasingly aware of alcohol's devastating toll on the economy and the social fabric. For example, an economist and sociologist recently argued in the Soviet press that "drunkenness is a threat to the social well-being of the entire nation and is a threat to the vital capabilities of the population." The temperance lecture cited above similarly contended that alcohol abuse had become a "national disaster" that was bringing about "progressive degeneration of the nation." The speaker at an April 1985 Znaniye lecture in Leningrad said that alcohol was a greater threat to the USSR than anti-Communism.

Drug Abuse. Although still small by Western standards, drug abuse has become a growing problem in the USSR over the past decade, especially among youth. Exposure of young soldiers to drug use in Afghanistan has been a major contributing factor, as they reportedly are bringing back home their acquired habits and drugs. Soviet and foreign sailors arriving at Soviet ports have also provided an expanding channel for the illegal acquisition of narcotics.

References to drug abuse—long a taboo subject for the Soviet press—have recently appeared in media commentary. Indeed, the spread of drug abuse among Georgian young people prompted the republic's party newspaper recently to declare, "Addicts hold out their hands for drugs, and their mothers die of broken hearts." Also, in January 1986, a popular Soviet magazine of news and culture carried an account of the life of a young addict under the title "A Warning." These references, despite the absence of statistics, indicate official concern about the drug problem.

narcotics usage and trafficking have steadily increased—particularly in a few major Soviet cities. there were 50,000 drug users in Moscow in the late 1970s.

There are reportedly more than 300 places in the Soviet capital where it is possible to buy drugs. 25X1

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the use and sale of narcotics have increased rapidly in several cities along the Volga River—Kazan', Saratov, Gor'kiy, and Ul'yanovsk. All these cities, each with a population of over 1 million, are said to have between 20,000 and 30,000 addicts each. 25X1

drugs were regularly sold in the "Kuznetshniy Rynok" market area in Leningrad. 25X1

drug addiction and trafficking are rapidly growing problems in the three Transcaucasian republics of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. 25X1

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Different segments of Soviet society are now using a broad range—in price and kind—of mood-changing narcotics. 25X1

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a small circle of wealthy addicts exists in the capital and includes many prestigious people—scientists, artists, writers, and athletes. In 1981-82 as much as a kilogram of morphine—worth nearly half a million rubles—was sold on a "good" day by dealers who would gather at various locations in the city "with ready syringes" and give injections to addicts who arrived in their own automobiles or in taxis. At the opposite extreme are "poor" addicts—minor criminals, workers, and students—who use "kuknar" (a dry opium poppy ground through a coffee grinder), a very potent but relatively inexpensive narcotic. 25X1

Hashish continues to be a popular and relatively inexpensive narcotic, used especially by Central Asians. According to various emigres, it has become fashionable among intellectuals to smoke hashish during evening meetings and friendly get-togethers, much like smoking marijuana in the West. In regions where hemp is grown, hashish smoking is traditional and widespread even among school children and college students. 25X1

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So far, Soviet authorities appear to have done little to arrest the growth of drug abuse. Drug dealers are able to obtain narcotics through a variety of unofficial channels, including pharmacological plants, army medical service storage facilities, opium state farms, illegal home laboratories, the Ministry of the Interior (from its section for fighting narcotics), oncological centers, and medical and biological institutes. Emigre reporting indicates that codeine and morphine are frequently obtained by bribing physicians and nurses.

A Moscow addict, for example, can usually buy his way out of an investigation or harassment by the militia for 300 to 500 rubles.

although a network of treatment facilities for addicts has been set up, little has been done to detain or rehabilitate smugglers and traffickers.

Dissent in the USSR

The growth of social malaise essentially reflects a retreat from the political domain rather than a direct challenge to political authority. The average man, although politically alienated, is not politically assertive. Most citizens are resigned to the existing state of affairs and extraordinarily apathetic to "high politics." They consequently express their discontent in passive and private ways. Even many forms of dissent—the emigration movement, religion—basically represent attempts to escape authority rather than to change the system. Moreover, because many of the cleavages in Soviet society are crosscutting rather than mutually reinforcing, the regime has been able to impede interaction and the development of common interests among different disaffected groups.

In the 1980s the regime—by resorting to the most brutal tactics used since the Stalin era—has all but eliminated the small but vocal human rights movement that marked the late 1960s and early 1970s. Nevertheless, dissent has continued and in some ways may have become more threatening to the regime. There has been a vigorous revival of religion and of religious activism. Anti-Russian nationalism remains a potent, although largely latent, force with the potential of appealing to non-Russian elites.

At the same time, while regime brutality has intimidated many dissidents into a complete cessation of activity, others have merely been driven underground. The optimism of many dissidents in the 1960s and 1970s has been replaced by pessimism and even desperation. This evolution in some respects parallels the change in the outlook of society as a whole and has given rise to some dissenters who now are more prone to consider violent actions against the system. Their numbers are probably very small, but their troublemaking potential in unsettled conditions may not be.

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The profound disillusionment of many intellectuals with the impoverishment of Soviet culture provides fertile ground for future intellectual dissent. The increased political alienation of the population at large, the weakening of some traditional control mechanisms, and the manifest problems the regime has in maintaining worker discipline suggest that the preconditions for an expansion of the popular base of support for dissent could develop.

Human Rights Dissent. The dissident movement championing civil liberties on a broad scale in the USSR is at a low ebb. Intellectual dissent in support of human rights flourished in the early 1960s, when many intellectuals hoped that Khrushchev's move toward de-Stalinization portended a broader internal liberalization. Khrushchev's ouster in 1964 represented the triumph of conservative reaction within the leadership; repression of dissent increased, especially after the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. Human rights dissent revived on a smaller scale in the mid-1970s, when detente and the signing of the CSCE [6] accords once again stimulated hopes of some relaxation of internal repression. At that time a small but vibrant network of groups formed with the purpose of monitoring Soviet compliance with the human rights provisions of CSCE.

[6] Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

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This revival of human rights activism heightened regime concern about dissent, especially because the coordinated activity of the dissident CSCE groups raised the specter of a united dissident movement enjoying the support of Western governments and dissident groups in Eastern Europe. As the regime increasingly became disenchanted with detente, and consequently less concerned to avoid antagonizing Western governments and public opinion, it moved forcefully to crush the CSCE groups. Since the invasion of Afghanistan and the outbreak of unrest in Poland, the KGB has employed extremely harsh methods of repression.

A few new groups engaging in overt dissent have emerged in the 1980s. Most notably, small "peace" groups have been set up in several parts of the USSR with the avowed purpose of making the Soviet public aware of the cost of the arms race.

Overall, however, the dissident community has become thoroughly demoralized. In contrast to the mood of a decade ago, a feeling of *beziskhodnost* (no way out) has set in. Most dissidents feel isolated from the outside world and no longer believe Western support has any beneficial effect on their fortunes; many even see it as counterproductive. Unlike some earlier dissidents, they see no prospects for change within the system and have no dreams for a brighter future. They see the exile and isolation of Andrey Sakharov as a clear sign that a period of Soviet history has ended and a neo-Stalinist reaction has set in.

This mood is evident not only among the now tiny group of active dissidents but also among the larger group of intellectuals who once shared many of their aspirations, if not their courage. Some of the best writers and artists have defected or emigrated, and many of those who remain have become "inner emigres" who reject what they see as a spiritual vacuum in contemporary Soviet cultural life. Such individuals contrast the "silence" of Russian culture inside the USSR with the vigorous and stimulating output of the community of recent Russian emigres.

Figure 6. Aleksandr Shatravka, a Soviet peacenik who in April 1982 helped found the "Group To Establish Trust Between the US and USSR." This dissident antiwar group has been suppressed. Most of its leading activists are now abroad, in labor camps, or in prison. Shatravka, sentenced in April 1983 to three years for slandering the Soviet regime, was sentenced in February 1985 to an additional five years of labor camp on narcotics charges.

Sakharov continues to command respect among intellectuals. In some circles his confinement in Gor'kiy is referred to as "Lenin in exile." A recent study by the United States Information Agency (USIA) of Soviet elite opinion estimated that half of Soviet artists admire Sakharov as a noble figure who has performed a service for society in speaking out against human rights abuses. It also found that a majority of Soviet academics in nonpolitical fields favor an increase in opportunities for public expression of ideas that are contrary to government policy.

Intellectual dissidents, however, appear to command little popular support. A Radio Liberty poll of Soviet citizens traveling outside the USSR indicated about 20 percent of the Soviet population as a whole had a favorable opinion of Sakharov, about one-third an unfavorable opinion, and almost half had no opinion or were indifferent. Many people see the human rights dissidents as a self-interested, unpatriotic lot that serves the purposes of Western intelligence services. The regime has had considerable success in manipulating nationalist symbols, and much of the Russian population does not distinguish clearly between anti-regime and antinational behavior. The regime has also exploited popular anti-Semitism as a weapon against the dissidents.

groups such as the Helsinki Monitoring Group were commonly viewed as little more than devices for Jews wanting to leave the USSR.

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Worker Dissent. Although most of the Soviet working class tend to see intellectual dissidents as an alien group, since 1978 there have been several efforts on the part of workers themselves to organize dissident activity. The several independent trade unions formed that year soon met with repression similar to that meted out to intellectual activists, and all but one, SMOT (Free Interprofessional Association of Workers), were quickly forced to disband. SMOT evidently has gone underground and undergone a radicalization similar to that of some intellectual dissidents. Although most of SMOT's leaders known to the West were arrested, its samizdat (illegal literature) bulletin continued to appear intermittently—most recently in 1983. Some evidence suggests that a radical wing more disposed toward committing violent acts against the regime may now dominate the organization, having replaced moderates who reportedly favored attempting to work within the system for change over time. This radical group is also said to favor working closely with intellectuals to advance basic human rights. But we don't really know if SMOT still exists or has more than a handful of members.

At the same time, some intellectual dissidents, who initially displayed the traditional bias of their class by dismissing the worker dissidents as a group of "crazies," have come to acknowledge and support them as bona fide partners. This reported greater interest in cooperation between the workers and the intelligentsia doubtless feeds regime fears of a convergence of worker and intellectual dissent. Some emigre sources also believe that the psychological gap between workers and intellectuals has narrowed with the expansion of education in the USSR. Conceivably, this could make it more difficult for the regime to use "divide and rule" tactics. These tactics rely on workers' traditional distrust of intellectuals to prevent their turning to the dissident intellectuals for leadership and play on the intelligentsia's longstanding fear of revolt by the "dark" masses to ensure the intelligentsia's acceptance of authoritarian rule.

Religion. Religion today constitutes the most widespread manifestation of rejection of the official values of the avowedly atheistic Soviet system, but it does not pose a direct threat to the regime. For most, religion is not dissent but largely an alternative source of values and inspiration, itself a substantial enough challenge to merit regime concern. Moreover, the most important reason for the growth of religion seems to be simply that many Soviet citizens are seeking refuge from what they see as the drabness and emptiness of contemporary Soviet life.

Reasons for Regime Concern Over the Growth of Religion

The burgeoning of religion and of religious activism is alarming to the Soviet regime for several reasons:

- *In many areas religion reinforces anti-Russian nationalism. In Lithuania and the western part of the Ukraine, areas where a majority of the population is Catholic, the church has historically been associated with strivings for independence from Russia. Similarly, in Soviet Central Asia the Islamic religion has historically provided a rallying point for those resisting Russian domination—as, for example, during the Basmachi revolt of the 1920s, which took many years for the regime to suppress.*

- *Unlike intellectual dissent, religion has a mass base even in Russian areas. Protestant fundamentalism is growing in newly industrialized areas of the Russian republic, and Russian Orthodoxy is attracting adherents in the older cities of the Russian heartland.*

- *Increasingly, religion cuts across class and generational lines. Religion is growing among blue-collar workers as well as among the educated classes. And for the first time since 1917 religion is attracting large numbers of Russian youth, some of whom appear to embrace religion as a means of expressing their rejection of the system.*

- *Religion opens the door to external influences. The election of a Slavic Pope served as a stimulus to religious activity in the western borderlands of the USSR. The resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East and the war in Afghanistan have raised Muslim consciousness in Soviet Central Asia somewhat.*

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Most religious believers in the USSR are members of "registered" or "official" churches who abide by the regime's strictures on religious activity—such as the ban on proselytizing and on religious instruction for children—in exchange for being allowed to worship in peace. Clergy for these churches must be approved by the regime, and some of them serve as propagandists for regime policy—using their sermons to preach the party line regarding foreign policy, for example. The regime attempts to use these official churches to keep the activities of religious believers under close surveillance and supervision.

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At the same time, the regime uses the official Russian Orthodox Church for "imperialistic" purposes, by giving it special privileges (more Bibles, more church buildings), in an effort to lure believers away from churches associated with anti-Russian nationalism.

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Figure 7. The Russian Orthodox Church has been successful in retaining many privileges and appurtenances that it enjoyed as the state church of the czarist regime and which Stalin restored as the price of the church's support during World War II. In turn, top Orthodox Church officials are often spokesmen for Soviet foreign policy—particularly, the "peace" campaign—

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Despite the regime's attempts to use the official churches for its own purposes, the growing numbers worshiping in these churches testify to the failure of Marxist ideology in competing with religious "vestiges of the past" for the "hearts and minds" of the Soviet population. More significantly, the number of *unofficial* congregations of all faiths appears to be increasing. Many of these groups have developed clandestine communications networks that enable them to collect thousands of signatures on a countrywide basis for petitions and to regularly publish illegal literature:

- In the Ukraine a semisecret and illegal Catholic Church organization reportedly has as many as 250 priests conducting services underground. Since the summer of 1984, 10 issues of a new samizdat journal, *Chronicle of the Ukrainian Catholic Church*, have appeared. According to this journal, numerous Ukrainian Catholics have been imprisoned for refusing to serve in the military.
- In Lithuania, a Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights has been active in petitioning for an end to repressive legislation against religion. The *Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church*, which first appeared in 1972, remains one of the most vigorous samizdat journals in the country. In 1983, 99 Lithuanian priests sent a letter to Andropov in defense of two dissident priests who had been arrested. This letter was followed by a petition calling for release of the priests that was signed by 123,000 Lithuanians.

- Many unregistered Protestant sects—especially the Baptists and Pentecostals—are attracting large numbers of rural, factory, and white-collar workers throughout the country. Many of these groups are zealous to the point of being fanatic in protesting such regime measures as "accidental" burnings of churches and forcible removals of children from parents' homes to prevent their receiving a religious upbringing. They respond to repression by engaging in mass civil disobedience—such as burning internal passports and resisting induction into the military. One isolated village in the Soviet Far East is virtually at war with the regime. It has engaged in continuing protests for several years, including four community hunger strikes. Thousands of Pentecostals continue to apply for emigration visas despite the regime's absolute refusal to grant them. With the assistance of some registered Baptist congregations, the unofficial Baptists publish three samizdat journals, one of which is printed in a thousand copies monthly.

- a fully developed underground religious structure exists in Muslim areas of Central Asia and the Caucasus. illegal seminaries are educating mullahs who teach Islam to children in unofficial mosques. There has reportedly also been a minor resurgence, especially in the North Caucasus, of secret Sufi brotherhoods who combine religious fanaticism with anti-Russian nationalism.

- Over the past several years a number of Russian Orthodox priests have been arrested for accusing the church hierarchy of collaborating with the regime. Others said to be especially popular among youth have been purged. a samizdat *Information of the Russian Orthodox Church* appears monthly.

Some of the samizdat literature published by unofficial churches is of a purely religious character, but some of it reports on broader human rights issues and even on such things as casualties in Afghanistan.

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Nationalism. The regime has managed to contain but not to reduce nationalism among non-Russian ethnic groups, who now make up over half of the Soviet population. Anti-Russian nationalism expresses itself both in overt dissent and in the efforts of non-Russian elites to advance their interests by working within the system.

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A series of issues bearing directly on the resources, power, and status of different nationalities are at the heart of current ethnic tensions. These interconnected issues have contributed significantly to conflict within the Soviet elite. Conflict over the relative degree of centralization or decentralization of economic planning and management is to some extent encouraged by the very existence of an ostensibly federal state structure. To a considerable degree, this structure has enabled the regime to co-opt native elites by giving them a stake in the system without according them any real share of power. While many non-Russian elites are thoroughly Russified and see themselves essentially as executors of regime policy rather than as representatives of their people, the existence of theoretically autonomous political-administrative units provides an institutional framework in which native elites can and do maneuver within limits to expand their operational authority. Because these units are organized along nationality lines, in some cases the interest of a local party chief in enhancing his administrative freedom coincides with the aspirations of the indigenous nationality to reduce Russian control in a more general sense.

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The pace and pattern of economic development have constituted a second area of controversy. Within the framework of a unified national economy based on regional specialization, local elites have called for

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more diversified and balanced economic growth within their republics. Moreover, the economic slowdown has aggravated competition between regional claimants for scarce resources and intensified resentments of nationalities who blame their low standard of living on what they see as Russian colonial policies:

- Elites in the Baltic republics have urged greater investment in light and consumer industry in their area, in response to widespread resentment among the Baltic peoples that they are footing the bill for investment in these industries in less developed parts of the country.

- In other western republics, the emphasis on Siberian development is challenged by the advocates of a "European strategy," who call for increased investment in the western regions of the country.

- Priority development of Siberia is also challenged by Central Asian elites, who have been especially vocal in pressing for a plan to divert Siberian rivers to bring vitally needed water to their parched lands.

Cadre policy is another subject of controversy. Brezhnev's personnel policies in effect enabled regional elites to become somewhat more independent of central control. Many of them took advantage of the opportunity to develop entrenched networks of corruption and nepotism that sometimes furthered the interests of indigenous elites at the expense of local Russians. There is abundant evidence that some non-Russian elites are annoyed at their exclusion from the most sensitive political posts, while some local Russians are concerned over their lost political status.

Both Russian and non-Russian elements are promoting increased—or even proportional—representation in the political apparatus inside the republics to strengthen their respective ethnic positions, and some non-Slavic elites are pressing the same policy for the Russian-dominated central machinery in Moscow as well. Central Asian elites, who have traditionally been shunted into cultural or scientific posts, have increasingly pushed for—and gained under Brezhnev—access to more important positions. Groups from the Caucasus, who have long been strongly represented in the internal security apparatus, are said to give preferential treatment to their ethnic kin. 25X1

some Ukrainians who attain positions of responsibility use their influence to secure jobs for other Ukrainians—especially in the Ministry of Defense. 25X1

Job competition in nonpolitical fields has also intensified. The process of economic modernization has over the decades brought with it a major influx of Russians into non-Russian republics. Expanded contacts between Russian and indigenous populations has heightened the ethnic consciousness of each and pitted Russians against non-Russians in the job market. Shrinking opportunities for upward social mobility have aggravated ethnic competition for key positions. 25X1

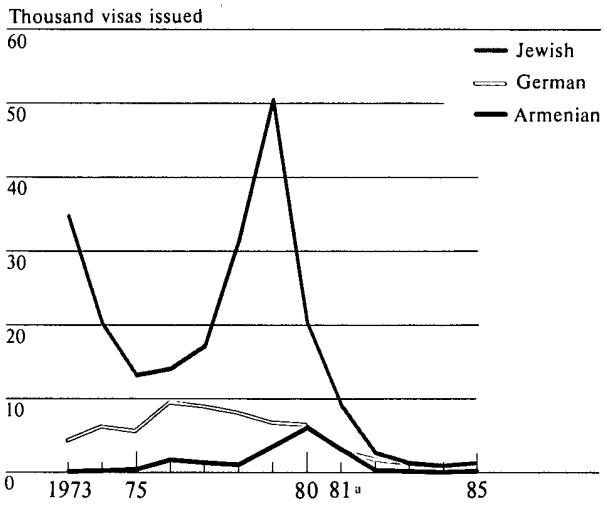
Demographic policy and trends have become yet another catalyst of tensions. Nationalities experiencing declining birthrates express growing anxiety over the threat to their national identity, focusing their criticism on central policies that they believe have contributed to their shrinking " weight" in the country. This issue has particular salience for Latvians and Estonians. Because of low birthrates and a massive influx of Russians into Latvia, Latvians now constitute only a bare majority of the population of their own republic and less than 40 percent of the population of their capital city. In Estonia, the Estonian share of the republic's population dropped between 1959 and 1979, the year of the last census, from 74 percent to 64 percent. In the Estonian capital city there are almost as many Russians as Estonians. These trends, which many Balts think are largely the consequence of a deliberate regime policy of Russification, have given rise to fear about their survival as distinct ethnic groups. 25X1 25X1

By contrast, high birthrates in Central Asia are a source of pride and self-confident assertiveness, as well as a rationale for the allocation of increased resources and greater political representation for their 25X1

region. A number of leading Soviet economists and demographers advocate the use of greater incentives to increase the Slavic birthrate. Most Central Asians, however, oppose such a policy and also oppose any large-scale migration of their people to alleviate labor shortages in other areas. Instead, they lobby for greater investment in industry in Central Asia to absorb the burgeoning population there.

Language policy has become especially sensitive in recent years. Native elites have long resented that upward mobility in many fields depends on mastery of the Russian language and Russian cultural norms. Recent shifts in language policy intended to give further impetus to the study of Russian, and which threaten the status of the local language, have generated severe resistance. In Georgia, for example, there have been a number of large-scale demonstrations and protests over linguistic Russification—in 1978, 1980, and 1981. In the Baltic republics there have been similar demonstrations. Students in Tallinn, for example, protested in 1980 against being forced to read Russian in school and against the appointment of a Russian as the republic's Minister of Education.

Figure 8
USSR: Emigration, 1973-85



[a] 1981 Armenian emigration rate is an estimate.

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On the popular level, nationalism feeds a wide range of other societal problems. These include consumer grievances, religious activism, vulnerability to external influences, and youth alienation.

Nationalism also gives impetus to emigration campaigns. In addition to Soviet Jews, Armenians, and ethnic Germans—until recently allowed to leave on a highly restricted basis if they had family ties to citizens in foreign countries—many other non-Russians want to depart. These include many of the almost 2 million ethnic Germans who lack family ties to West German citizens. Soviet Germans denied exit visas have staged a number of mass protests over the past several years. There are also about 25,000 ethnic Greeks actively seeking to emigrate.

Nationality problems also have adverse implications for military morale and effectiveness. In 1980 Russians for the first time made up less than half of the draft-age population. Central Asians will make up about 30 percent of the draft-age population by the end of the decade. Until now, the Soviets have used Central Asian recruits largely in construction and other rear service units—both because of concern about their political loyalty and because of their lower-than-average level of technical competence and knowledge of the Russian language. If necessity requires greater reliance on Central Asians for combat duties, troop reliability could be impaired in the event of unpopular future military interventions.

The officer corps remains largely the preserve of Slavic elites, and the growing prevalence of non-Slavic troops commanded by Slavic officers is a source of tension. Emigre surveys indicate that those who have served in the military in recent years perceive a greater degree of ethnic discrimination than those who served in earlier periods. In a March 1985 samizdat interview an Estonian who had fought in

Afghanistan indicated that Central Asian soldiers there had a "blind hatred" for those of European nationality.

A number of factors assist the regime in managing ethnic tensions:

- One regime asset turns on matters of comparative size, consciousness, integration, and demands of different national groups. The potential demographic weight of the Central Asian republics is offset in the short run by a parochial, underdeveloped, and self-sufficient way of life that makes comparatively few demands on the system, and by a recognition on the part of many Central Asians that they have profited more than many European nationalities from the regime's economic development strategy. On the other hand, the most "advanced" Soviet nationalities—the Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians—that are likely to make the greatest demands and are potentially the least "digestible" are also numerically the smallest. The Ukrainians are an exception. They comprise almost a fifth of the Soviet population, have national traditions of opposition to Russian rule, and a well-developed economic and sociological base for national assertiveness.

- In many cases, class divisions are stronger than ethnic ones. A number of Soviet sociological surveys, suggest that educational level and occupation are usually more important than ethnicity in determining attitudes and behavior.

- Non-Russian groups do not generally make common cause against the Russians. Not all national consciousness on the part of non-Russian minorities is anti-Soviet or even anti-Russian. Sometimes it is directed against other minorities, and Moscow exploits these national rivalries. Regions and republics compete with each other over the allocation of resources. A survey of emigres indicated that tensions between Armenians and Georgians were worse than between either group and Russians. Ukrainians find themselves in agreement with Russians rather than with non-Slavs on many issues.

- Overall, the continuing vitality of Russian nationalism remains a major asset for the regime. Many Russians take pride in the USSR's superpower status, support Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe, and oppose any significant increase in autonomy for the non-Russian nationalities in the USSR. Many fear that any liberalization of internal policy would unleash separatist strivings of the Soviet minorities. 25X1

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Many Russians, however, are increasingly complaining about regime policies that they believe have sacrificed Russian national interests for the sake of developing outlying areas of the USSR. Although Russians still dominate the party, military, cultural, and economic structure of the country, many of them feel increasingly threatened by the minorities that are overtaking them in population growth. There is evidence of grumbling among Russians about reverse discrimination and advocacy of vigorous counteraction to protect their professional and economic interests. 25X1

25X1

Most dissatisfied with the availability of goods were young, unmarried ethnic Russian men living in the Russian Republic. 25X1

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Some Russians disaffected with regime policies find sustenance in the works of a group of nationalist writers, the most famous of which are Vladimir Soloukhin and Valentin Rasputin. These writers implicitly call for a purification and moral regeneration of Russia on the basis of traditional values and Russian Orthodoxy—much as Solzhenitsyn does. these writers have become cultural heroes who articulate the discontent of large numbers of people against the Soviet system as a whole. Along with the popular painter Ilya Glazunov and the late poet/singer Vladimir Vysotsky, they appeal not only to Russians distressed by demographic and economic trends they believe are damaging the country's Russian essence, but also to those concerned about the erosion of moral standards and

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the Russian soul. There have been indications that the ideas of the conservative nationalist writers appeal even to some elites who believe that corruption has weakened the party's authority. The leadership has reason for concern that the popularity of these writers could turn Russian national feeling into antiregime channels.

Political Opposition. Disillusionment about the efficacy or even the possibility of overt dissent appears to be causing some dissidents to turn to clandestine forms of organization. A new breed of dissidents—still very small in numbers—sees dissent as an end in itself, a spiritual refuge, and a way of rendering meaning to life. Eschewing contact with foreigners and criticizing the older generation of dissidents for not having a program of political action, they appear inclined toward violent actions that court martyrdom.

This trend has been most pronounced in some non-Russian areas, especially in the Baltic republics, where probably a majority of the population would prefer a return to independent statehood:

- there was an intellectual "opposition" in Estonia, loosely organized around the universities in Tallinn and especially in Tartu, which had a "kamikaze" attitude. those associated with it were willing to make extreme personal sacrifices for a meaningful form of protest against the regime. the Estonian "underground" had coordinated its activities with the Polish Solidarity union.

- In 1981 the regime rounded up leaders of an underground "Social Democratic Party of Latvia," which was said to have developed contacts with supporters in Sweden and demanded Latvian independence from the USSR. More recently, in 1983-84, several members of an underground "Movement for the Independence of Latvia" were convicted, according to emigre reporting.

- political assassinations or attempted assassinations in non-Russian areas. For example, an MVD official in Georgia was reportedly shot, and attempts reportedly were made against the lives of unpopular party bosses in Georgia and in the western Ukraine. There have been persistent rumors of attempts on the lives of the Estonian and Latvian party chiefs, and an emigre source reported an underground group in Lithuania had attempted to kill the head of the party there. 25X1 25X1

There have also been indications that some Russian dissidents, many of them working-class youth, are becoming more radical:

- Two leading members of the dissident community told a US Embassy official last year that lengthy prison sentences serve as no deterrent to dissent because some demoralized dissidents derive satisfaction from going to prison for the sake of their cause. They see dissent more as a substitute for religion than as a vehicle for changing society. According to one dissident, there is a clearly definable group of hardened young dissidents who are promoting the idea of toppling the regime. 25X1

- Last year several dissidents—all between the ages of 19 and 25—were arrested for setting up a Social Democratic Party. Their program advocated, inter alia, a multiparty democracy. 25X1 25X1 25X1

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- Older dissidents Anatoly Marchenko and Ivan Kovalev have said that repression is pushing young dissidents toward extremism and interest in terrorism. 25X1 25X1

black marketing of firearms, especially in Tula, a center for the manufacture of small arms, where they are reportedly smuggled out of factories. 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1

The guns are probably bought by criminals rather

than oppositionists, but in an environment of harsh repression the possibility that opposition to the regime might assume more violent forms cannot be discounted. This would be most likely to happen in areas such as the Ukraine that have traditions of armed resistance to Russian rule.

Civil Unrest. Since 1970 approximately 300 cases of civil unrest—demonstrations, strikes, riots, and other political violence—have been reported by emigres, Embassy contacts, Western press, and samizdat.[7] Close to 100 cities (or oblasts) in the USSR have reported civil disorder of one kind or another. Nearly half of these cities have experienced two or more events. Incidents of unrest have been reported in every Soviet republic except Turkmenistan. Available evidence indicates a significant increase in unrest, particularly in the 1979-82 period. Reported incidences of unrest have declined in the last three years.

most civil unrest is economically based. Food shortages and dissatisfaction with the quality of life in the USSR account for more reported incidents than any other factor.

In one instance—at a Chelyabinsk steel plant—the demonstration turned into a mass protest; in another, party members in Perm turned in their party cards to protest food shortages.

there were food riots in Novgorod and Vologda in 1984. Numerous injuries occurred in Vologda, where crowds marching on a food warehouse were reportedly repelled by local police forces.

On the other hand, the experience of the past few years suggests that modest growth in production and continued imports of quality foods, accompanied by a continuation of the system of distributing food at the workplace, will probably prevent food shortages from becoming the volatile issue they threatened to become in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Moscow appears to have blunted the potentially serious impact of food shortages with these measures that are likely to remain in place for at least several years—whether or not growth in consumption of quality foods continues at its recent pace. 25X1 25X1

Although the chief cause of unrest has been economic, some protest has had political overtones. For example, public irritation over local government corruption was said to be a factor in the mass rioting that occurred over a three-day period in 1981 in Ordzhonikidze, a large city in the North Caucasus area of the Russian Republic. 25X1 25X1 25X1

Most reported cases of unrest are in the non-Russian republics, where economic discontent blends with resentment of the Russian presence. A number of instances of sabotage—including attempts to blow up trains and bridges—have occurred in the Baltic republics. In 1979, for example, six fires were set simultaneously in Latvia, including one at the Supreme Soviet building in Riga, and a TV tower was reportedly bombed in Tallinn. A reliable contact of the US Embassy in Moscow recently reported that in 1984 Armenian activists blew up a bus in Azerbaijan. In May 1985 over 300 Latvians were arrested following a brawl between Latvian and Russian youth. 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1

In the late 1970s and early 1980s there reportedly was also increased unrest in Russia itself. Labor strikes particularly increased; the largest was in the Volga city of Tolyatti, where tens of thousands of workers went out on strike in 1980. Since 1980 there have also been several large demonstrations in major Russian cities by young students and workers claiming to be fascists. They reportedly called for a restoration of order and discipline and a cleansing of Russia from "impure" ethnic elements. The 1980 Moscow funeral of popular singer Vysotsky, who implicitly criticized regime values and whose music was consequently banned during his lifetime, turned into a demonstration involving many thousands. 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1

Noril'sk—a remote Siberian city —has had repeated labor problems for a number of years, including a 1982 strike that lasted two weeks.

It seems probable that other disadvantaged, but less accessible, cities have had similar problems.

during the course of most major construction projects workers went out on strike two or three times to protest food shortages.

The number of reported incidents of unrest may, nevertheless, give a misleading impression:

- Most of the reported incidents were small and short lived. There were about 20 cases of rioting involving over 1,000 people, but no single incident was as serious as the prolonged and large-scale rioting that took place in Novocherkassk in June 1962.[8]

- Most unrest has been issue specific and place specific. There are no institutionalized channels in the USSR for effectively transmitting appeals for mass action to the public, and the sheer size of the country makes it easier for the regime to isolate and contain unrest. Only a handful of the strikes that have occurred have spread from one location or factory to another, and often the population in unaffected areas does not learn about incidents of unrest even when they are major. 25X1

- When the population does learn about protest activity, many people condemn it. A 1981 survey of Soviet public attitudes conducted by Radio Liberty estimated that about half the population opposes the right to strike, while many other Soviet citizens have ambivalent attitudes. Only in the Caucasian and Baltic areas does a majority of the population believe workers should have the right to strike. Many Soviets appear to have no conception of a strike as a legitimate means of bargaining for better working conditions; they see strikes essentially as revolutionary challenges to the political order. 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1

The Soviet leadership, however, has reacted to unrest as if it posed a serious challenge. Since the massive disorders in Novocherkassk in 1962, the regime has been loath to use armed force in dealing with any large-scale industrial unrest or popular demonstration. The immediate reaction of the authorities has invariably been conciliatory. Typically, the regime moves quickly to conciliate the protestors by rushing in food supplies, acceding to demands for changes in working conditions and pay scales, or addressing other grievances. It usually waits until order has been restored to arrest strike leaders. 25X1 25X1 25X1

Political Immobilism and Bureaucratic Corruption

At least until Brezhnev's death, loss of dynamism in the Soviet political system was reflected in and caused by weak leadership at the top, the aging of an entrenched ruling elite, growth of bureaucratic corruption and inertia, and institutional ossification. These trends have damaged the reputation of the regime in the eyes of the population and damaged the reputation of the Politburo in the eyes of Soviet elites. Indeed, Gorbachev's speeches and actions to date indicate that he sees the reversal of these trends as the top political priority of his regime. 25X1

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[8] The widely reported rioting in Novocherkassk, an industrial city in the Russian Republic, is described in detail by Alexander Solzhenitsyn in *The Gulag Archipelago* (pp. 507-514). Solzhenitsyn based his account on eyewitness reports. The direct catalyst of the Novocherkassk incident was a rise in the prices of meat and milk products and a simultaneous lowering of pay rates at many local enterprises. More than 10,000 workers took part in the demonstrations that ended in KGB troops shooting and killing several hundred people, including women and children.

Weak Leadership at the Top. The lack of vigorous leadership at the top was most evident in the physical weakness of the party general secretary. For nearly a decade—from Brezhnev's long, tedious slide into senility after the mid-1970s through the brief tenure of the infirm Andropov until the death of the enfeebled Chernenko in March 1985—the Soviet Politburo was headed by doddering old leaders who could not walk unaided or speak in public without notes. The advanced ages of Andropov and Chernenko when they assumed the top party post—at 68 and 72 years old, respectively—necessarily made them transitional figures while their deteriorating health prevented them from governing effectively and consolidating their power.

The presence at the helm of debilitated leaders accelerated an erosion of the power of the general secretary, a trend that had been evident since Stalin's death in 1953. From that time until Chernenko's death, each Soviet leader exerted less personal power over domestic and foreign policymaking than his predecessor.

This "law of diminishing general secretaries" has had particularly important political consequences in the highly centralized Soviet system, which is heavily dependent on strong leadership for the initiation and implementation of major policy, personnel, and structural change. With enfeebled leaders at the helm, the system as a whole showed signs of fatigue. As a Hungarian political official told US Embassy officers, "Brezhnev became sick and lived too long. During the lengthy period when he lacked stamina to govern fully, there was a general hardening of the arteries within the Soviet system." This situation in turn created an unsettled leadership environment in which policy initiatives and major problems were put on hold.

domestic and foreign policy had become a hostage to succession politics and marked by paralysis. By all indications, Gorbachev is clearly trying to reverse this "law" and restore the power of the general secretaryship.

Aside from the physical infirmities of the top leaders, Brezhnev's leaderhip style of consensus politics further eroded the position of general secretary. Under Brezhnev, policy differences were submerged in the name of unity, and, in general, compromise solutions were sought that would cause the least disturbance and shock to the system.[9]

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As a consequence of the lack of dynamic leadership at the top prior to Gorbachev's accession, the gulf between the top leadership and lower-level officials grew. Many elites looked on the leaders as "they"—a breed alien to themselves in outlook, norms, and behavior. USIA interviews of Soviet elite members indicate that most elites during Brezhnev's final years and during the Andropov and Chernenko interregnums saw the top leadership as dominated by a geriatric group out of touch with reality and lacking any long-range vision or strategy for dealing with accumulated problems.

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The weak image projected by the ailing Chernenko, in particular, generated discontent and disdain among Soviet elite groups and ordinary people during the last months of his reign and undermined his effectiveness as General Secretary and public symbol of a strong leadership.

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The protracted nature of the Brezhnev succession, the resistance of the Politburo's old guard to turning over the leadership baton to a younger generation, and the physical incapacitation and short-lived adminstrations of Andropov and Chernenko contributed to a more general image of policy drift and lack of direction in the Kremlin.

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[9] This modus operandi was in large measure a reaction to the Khrushchev era. Khrushchev's aggressive style, circumvention of the bureaucracy, initiation of structural reorganization, and policy shifts struck terror into the hearts of the party-state elite and ultimately spelled his doom. Brezhnev, undoubtedly viewing Khrushchev's ouster as an object lesson, accepted a role as mediator of conflicting interests oriented toward preserving bureaucratic peace rather than a "mover and shaker" bent on effecting economic and social change. He reigned but did not rule.

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Graying of the Elite. A hallmark of Brezhnev's rule was the "stability of cadres," which meant, in effect, security of tenure for Soviet officialdom at almost all levels. To a degree unequaled in any other period of Soviet history, the leadership and key elite groups remained unchanged during the Brezhnev era. Retention rates of Central Committee members at party congresses in the 1970s, for example, exceeded 80 percent. 25X1

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As a consequence of this policy, the Soviet Union entered the 1980s with the oldest leadership and central and regional elites in its history. The average age of full Politburo members rose from 61 after Krushchev's ouster in 1964 to nearly 70 at Brezhnev's death in 1982. Over this same period, the average age of Central Committee secretaries and department heads increased from 52 to 66 and that for members of the Council of Ministers increased from 55 to 65. A large proportion of the occupants of these key positions were over 70 at the time of Brezhnev's death, and many had held their posts through the entire Brezhnev period. The average age of full members of the Central Committee similarly rose from 56 at the 1966 CPSU Congress to nearly 64 at the 1981 Congress. 25X1

Brezhnev's policy of keeping the same aging and ailing officials in office regardless of their performance—originally designed to ensure the loyalty of the elite to the Politburo and to Brezhnev personally—had the ultimate effect of reducing the General Secretary's leverage on the bureaucracy. A strong negative incentive to implement regime policy faithfully (fear of losing one's job) became weaker. Many officials, feeling immune from removal, became complacent in their sinecures. The Brezhnev pattern of recruiting new provincial chiefs from within the local party apparatus also deprived the center of a means to shake up long-entrenched party networks of inept, if not downright corrupt, officials. In short, Brezhnev purchased the political support of the elite at the price of diminished central power to mobilize lower level officials behind regime policy. 25X1

In addition to enhancing elite independence, Brezhnev's cadres policies contributed to the regime's image of decrepitude.

a refusenik contact who has been pulled in for questioning many times by the local KGB told Leningrad Consulate officials in January 1985 that he had frequently heard his interrogators disparage and ridicule the Soviet leadership. Even the Central Committee as a whole was purportedly referred to as "a group of ineffectual and senile fools."

More generally, Brezhnev's cadres policies caused a deepening of generational divisions within the elite. For the past decade, ambitious young and well-educated party cadres whose careers were stalled have felt stymied by the lack of headroom Brezhnev's system provided. Increasingly, however, this younger generation, eager to advance their careers and to revitalize the system, are being moved up the political hierarchy—first by Andropov and now by Gorbachev.

Elite Corruption. Above all, the lax personnel policies of the Brezhnev regime created a climate conducive to elite corruption. Corruption is a way of life for Soviet officialdom, born of the very nature of the political and economic system. Bribery is a universal skeleton key to obtain desired goods and services or specific favors and actions. Under Brezhnev, however, corrupt practices—bribe taking, embezzlement, and deception—became particularly widespread and blatant, with Brezhnev's own family providing a graphic example. Although the extent of corruption cannot be measured precisely, considerable evidence indicates that it has grown in recent years at all levels of officialdom:

Response of Soviet Emigres to the Question: "Did You Use Pull To Get Your First Soviet Job?"

The Soviet Interview Project survey of recent Soviet emigres to the United States shows a steady increase since the 1960s in the use of political influence in the job market. This is seen particularly in their response to the above question on the use of pull to get their first Soviet job:

Year Began First Job	Total Questioned	Yes	No
1919-30	29	2(7%)	27(93%)
1931-35	60	7(12%)	53(88%)
1936-40	50	7(14%)	43(86%)
1941-45	47	5(11%)	42(89%)
1946-50	65	13(20%)	52(80%)
1951-55	66	17(26%)	49(74%)
1956-60	124	44(35%)	80(65%)
1961-65	116	38(33%)	78(67%)
1966-70	132	42(32%)	90(68%)
1971-75	140	61(44%)	79(56%)
1976-83	57	29(51%)	28(49%)

- increased corruption within Soviet bureaucracies that have access to Western merchandise commanding high prices on the black market, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and especially the Ministry of Foreign Trade.

- corruption is especially widespread among officials supervising food and consumer goods industries.

Under Brezhnev, officials protected by the stability-of-cadres policy were able to use their public positions to enrich themselves almost with impunity. An unwritten rule of the system was that even if an official failed in one job he had the right to another job at the same level. This led to what the Soviet press has dubbed "the cadres merry-go-round," whereby corrupt and incompetent officials are shielded and shunted from one leading post to another. An additional layer of protection for party members is provided by their being virtually above the law. A party member can be taken to court only after he has been expelled from the party—a step that party committees have been very reluctant to undertake, since it invariably reflects badly on them. In this system, senior officials in particular are generally not exposed, much less punished for wrongdoing.

Another reason that corruption was able to flourish on such a grand scale and with apparent openness was that law enforcement agencies themselves—particularly the police (MVD)—became heavily involved in concealing and committing corrupt practices they were supposed to be stopping. militiamen are mainly former soldiers from the provinces who come to Moscow and Leningrad, in particular, in the hope of "cashing in" on the local corruption. They have become brazen enough to take bribes from almost anyone, even from known KGB officers, Soviet emigres who left the USSR in the late 1970s and early 1980s also testify that police corruption is widespread. According to a large interview study of more than a thousand recent emigres (75 percent of whom were Jews) conducted by University of Michigan Professor Zvi Gitelman, half of the respondents from the Ukraine and the Russian Republic believed they could bribe a policeman to overlook a minor infraction. Two-thirds of those from Moldavia, Central Asia, and the Baltic republics thought it possible to bribe a policeman, and three-fourths of the respondents from Georgia felt this way. the militia is also involved in organized crime, including murder and robbery of well-to-do citizens.

Elite corruption has had serious negative consequences for the regime: 25X1

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- By providing alternative sources of income, corruption makes lower-level officials somewhat less dependent on privileges bestowed by the party. Some elites have in effect taken out insurance policies against possible loss of office through the so-called duplication phenomenon. For example, an official whose position entitles him to a state-provided dacha builds a second dacha on the side from illegally acquired money, so that if he falls out of political favor, and consequently loses the official dacha, he will still have a dacha of his own. In this way, corruption undermines the effectiveness of the system of elite privileges and makes it harder to keep officials in line.

- Revelations of corruption and nepotism of varying scale even at the Politburo level—involving, for example, Uzbek party boss Rashidov, First Deputy Premier Aliyev, and Brezhnev's son and son-in-law—have damaged the leadership's credibility. 25X1

- Corruption has a corrosive effect on regime legitimacy in the eyes of the population at large. The public's growing awareness of official illegalities has contributed to erosion of the population's respect for law and authority, and the knowledge that the burden of economic difficulty is not shared equally aggravates the normal frustrations of daily life. 25X1 25X1

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Institutional Ossification. emigre reporting indicates a general decline in the vitality of Soviet institutions in recent years. Under Brezhnev, supervisory layers and paperwork multiplied. Attention shifted away from action to forms, procedures, and appearances. Individuals lost a sense of urgency and responsibility about their tasks. The growth of bureaucracy and corruption hobbled the ability of various institutions to respond to problems rapidly and effectively. 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1

These organizational trends have evidently been particularly characteristic of the Communist Party. Many elites believe the party has evolved from an agent of historical change into a guardian of the status quo, more concerned with preserving its own privileges and prerogatives than with addressing national needs.

In fact, the pejorative nickname *khlebnaya knizhka* (meal ticket) is frequently applied to the official CPSU membership card. This attitude has become more general with the regime's failure to improve the economic situation and the public's awareness of corruption at official levels.

The growth of careerism among party members threatens the "combat" ethos of the party.

many party functionaries intentionally avoid assignments to positions above the district level because of the greater political exposure and pressure of these jobs. Increasingly, political activity has become stylized ritual devoid of any genuine enthusiasm on the part of party *apparatchiki*.

More broadly, interviews of emigres who left the USSR in the 1970s and early 1980s suggest that the growth of cynicism among the Soviet population relates not only to Communist ideology but also to Soviet formal institutions. The average citizen has no desire to participate in public organizations and official activities. A Soviet official study of the preferences of Soviet newspaper readers and television viewers indicated that only a fourth of those polled were interested in the affairs of the party and other regime organizations.

The better educated citizens, in particular, have little faith in the efficacy of formal institutions. This suggests that, instead of progressively socializing people to the myths of the system, Soviet education may have just the opposite effect. For some, the facade of nominally democratic institutions—elections, mass rallies, "voluntary" organizations—merely emphasizes the gap between rhetoric and reality. For these people the charade of mass participation is counterproductive; rather than being taken in, they resent the attempt at deception. In their case, the institutional myths of the system have themselves become a source of alienation.

At the same time, Western studies based on interviews with recent emigres emphasize that Soviet citizens through informal practices and illegal tactics have learned how to "beat the system" and deal with the bureaucracy. With the use of personal connections, "pull," and bribery they are sometimes able to manipulate official agencies to secure favorable decisions on matters that directly touch their daily lives—getting a job, finding an apartment, evading military service, and even emigration. People have no illusions about influencing official policy, nor do they seek to do so, but they maneuver to avoid having these policies applied adversely to themselves.

This unofficial system of privatized political "participation" has expanded to the point of constituting a kind of "second polity" paralleling the "second economy." In both the economic and political spheres, intricate networks of families and friends serve as the chief means of circumventing the formal system.

Moreover, such informal arrangements are particularly pervasive in Moscow where it is understood that "everyone is on the fix. Heaven knows what kind of life it has become. All around . . . everything is done through connections."

These informal individualized practices of getting around the system in some respects make life more livable both for Soviet citizens and for the authorities. Yet they testify to the growing irrelevance of the formal institutional structure in contemporary Soviet life.

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Shift in Elite Attitudes. These trends are both a consequence and a cause of growing morale problems within the Soviet elite, problems which in many respects parallel those within society at large. Just as the population has become more acquisitive, many officials have become chiefly interested in preserving their privileges and especially in passing them on to their children. Many Soviet elites have developed a caste mentality, and their commitment to serving the party or the country as opposed to their own private interests has weakened. While corruption and political immobilism are symptoms of the elite's diminished sense of social purpose, however, they are also sources of elite dissatisfaction with the internal situation.

A shift in the mood of the elite is indicated, first and foremost, the elite's vision of the Soviet future has become gloomier and its confidence in the regime's ability to deal with the country's problems has decreased:

- A USIA sampling of Soviet professionals (and their Western contacts) conducted in 1982-84 suggests that a majority of elite members believed then that "the Soviet economy was in such bad shape that major changes must be made" but were dubious that such changes were in the offing.

- Soviet officials believe the economy is "played out" and will never achieve any better results than the present "dismal levels." Soviet economic specialists are said to be worried about "impending disaster" unless serious reforms are carried out.

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Morale problems are also reflected in an erosion of elite discipline, as illustrated by the lowered inhibitions elite groups have shown in recent years about criticizing top Soviet leaders. Irreverent references and unflattering rumors about the leaders abound among elite members. During Chernenko's brief tenure he became the butt of jokes and the target of disparaging remarks by lower-level officials to a degree probably unprecedented for a Soviet leader. Although much of this criticism of Chernenko seems to have been largely orchestrated, at least for foreigners, by the KGB on behalf of Andropov and/or Gorbachev supporters, the syndrome is corrosive.

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Large numbers of elite defections to the West provide further evidence of low elite morale. The problem of defections has been most pronounced among cultural figures, as highlighted by the departure of famous theater director Yuriy Lyubimov in 1984 and the prominent writer Georgiy Vladimov in 1983.

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Some evidence also suggests that conflict between elites may be on the rise. On the most self-interested level, competition for privileges appears to be increasing.

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Elites holding jobs in nonparty institutions are also reported to be speaking up with greater frequency and audacity about party abuses of power that are seen as

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threatening the integrity of the system itself. There are indications that the KGB, not surprisingly, has been especially concerned in recent years about combating corruption and tightening discipline, and that this has led to tension in KGB relations with some party leaders:

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Foreign Influences

The regime no longer has as complete a monopoly on information flow as it once had. In part because of the regime's detente policies in the 1970s, and in part because of technological developments in modern mass communications, Soviet citizens gained greater access to information from abroad during Brezhnev's tenure than ever before. At the same time, the expansion of education increased the size of the critically thinking population susceptible to outside ideas. This partial opening of a window to the outside has had a significant impact on popular attitudes. No

less important has been the effect, especially with regard to attitudes of the intelligentsia, of regime efforts in the 1980s to close this window.

Western Influences. Radio and television broadcasting has been by far the most important conduit for Western influence. In the 1970s the BBC, Deutsche Welle, Voice of America (VOA), and Radio Liberty developed a mass audience in the Soviet Union. VOA has the largest Soviet audience, with 30 to 38 million listeners monthly, according to Western estimates. Radio Liberty and the Baltic services of Radio Free Europe have from 17 to 25 million listeners monthly. Radio Liberty became especially important because of its focus on internal developments in the USSR and the writings of Soviet emigres. Soviet sociological surveys also have reported high listening levels among the Soviet population for Western radiobroadcasts—especially in the western borderlands, where reception is best, anti-Russian sentiment is strong, and the population has historical and cultural ties to Europe. Many Ukrainians and Belorussians also receive Polish television, and Estonians can pick up Finnish television. In addition to foreign broadcasting, Soviet citizens gain information and merchandise from the West through legitimate trade, letters, phone calls, parcels sent by emigres, contact with Western tourists, and travel abroad.

On the most basic level, the chief consequence of increased contact with the West has been to enable the Soviet consumer to compare his lot with that of people enjoying a much higher standard of living. Increased information from abroad and the increased availability of Western goods, especially on the black market, have brought home to Soviet consumers the inferior quality of Soviet merchandise. As early as 1976 *Kommunist* acknowledged as much by stating that "subversive Western propaganda makes use of the fact that the industrially developed capitalist countries still have a certain superiority in producing various consumer goods."

Exposure to Western products has led to widespread infatuation with material goods, fashions, and popular music, accompanied by a denigration of Soviet-made items. Western goods are almost automatically preferred and assumed, prima facie, to be superior to Soviet merchandise. Soviet women, for example, request friends traveling to Moscow to bring them any kind of imported perfume, even Bulgarian. The Soviet population has increasingly adopted a new standard of comparison for its material circumstances, looking not at the hardships of the Soviet past but at contemporary conditions outside the USSR—in Eastern Europe especially, but also in the capitalist West. Increased exposure to information from the West has devalued regime propaganda about the exploitation of workers, the dire consequences of unemployment, and widespread poverty in capitalist countries. As one citizen in a remote area of Siberia wrote to an ethnic German friend who had emigrated, "We hear a lot about how bad things are in the West, but here we have nothing at all."

Beyond the impact on consumer attitudes, exposure to Western sources of information has increased the Soviet population's knowledge of what is happening inside the USSR itself. In particular, foreign radiobroadcasts have come to play a critical role in disseminating information about the activities of dissident groups in the USSR and in giving broad circulation to the contents of samizdat. As the regime has moved in recent years to curtail the flow of samizdat within the country, Soviet dissidents have largely stopped trying to distribute their writings internally. Instead, they find ways to send them out of the country, whereupon they are picked up by Western radios and broadcast back into the USSR.

The Soviet intelligentsia is especially susceptible to external influences. In addition to information gained from academic exchanges and access to specialized Western literature, Soviet professionals listen to foreign radiobroadcasts in larger numbers and with greater frequency than other Soviet citizens. Through the medium of Western broadcasting, information about the writings of Soviet emigres is filtering back into the country. In effect, this has created an alternative Russian cultural center that many better educated Soviets probably find more vigorous and appealing than official Soviet culture.

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Since 1979 the regime has increasingly attempted to curtail unofficial contacts between Soviet citizens and Westerners. Jamming of Western radiobroadcasts was resumed during the Polish crisis, but they are still audible in some areas most of the time and in most areas some of the time. Regime efforts to reassert control over channels of information from the outside world have been a source of discontent among Soviet intellectuals. Encouraged by trends in the 1970s to think that they would have greater access to news and culture from the West, they now feel isolated. Just as the economic slowdown dashed expectations for rapid improvement in living conditions, the cutback in ties to the West has dashed hopes for a "greater movement of people and ideas."

In a sense, however, the increasing desire of the professional classes to travel abroad, to maintain contact with Western colleagues, and to gain access to scholarly publications from the West provides the regime with new opportunities to induce conformity. Use of permission to travel as a reward for good behavior is a powerful means of ensuring political quiescence on the part of the intelligentsia.

The War in Afghanistan. Soviet involvement in Afghanistan is aggravating an array of societal problems and enhancing the potential for serious political conflict within the Soviet elite. There is little active opposition to the war on the part of the population, but neither is there much active support. After five years of sustained regime propaganda "explaining" to the Soviet population why a Soviet military presence in Afghanistan is necessary, an unofficial poll that recently reached the West via samizdat channels indicates that 62 percent of 287 people interviewed in the Moscow area did not support the Soviet war effort. Radio Liberty interviews with some 2,960 Soviets who traveled to the West in 1984 indicate that a fourth supported regime policy in Afghanistan, another fourth opposed Soviet policy, and the remaining half expressed no opinion or interest. These figures suggest both deep popular apathy about public issues generally and strong limitations on the regime's ability to mobilize the population behind its policies.

The war has aggravated Soviet ethnic tensions, especially in Soviet Central Asia, but also in some other areas:

- The second survey cited above indicated, for example, that 74 percent of Tadzhiks—who live in Soviet Central Asia but share religious and cultural ties with the Afghans and speak a similar language—opposed the war.

- In the early period of Soviet intervention there were reports of unrest among Uzbeks and Tadzhiks when the coffins of their war dead began to arrive, spontaneous demonstrations at military recruitment centers in two Kazakh cities, and a riot at a Tashkent induction center. 25X1

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- In May 1984 a Soviet lecturer told a public audience that Islam represented a "very serious internal problem" and expressed concern about the effect of developments in Afghanistan on Soviet Tadzhiks.

- Both Soviet media and Western press articles have alleged that some Afghan resistance groups have made contact with sympathetic Muslims in Soviet Central Asia, who are said to have assisted in circulating leaflets against the war in Afghanistan.

- A Soviet intellectual with reasonably high-level connections told US Embassy officers in October 1984 that angry relatives of soldiers killed in Afghanistan had recently burned down the city military command building in the Russian city of Kazan' and created a disturbance in Baku, the capital of the Azerbaijan Republic.

- Reliable sources of the US Embassy in Moscow say that demonstrations against the Afghan war occurred in May 1985 in Tbilisi and Yerevan, the 25X1

capitals of the Georgian and Armenian Republics, respectively. Embassy contacts also report that in November 1985 the militia broke up a demonstration near a Moscow cemetery by mothers of Soviet soldiers who had been killed in Afghanistan.

Not surprisingly, the Afghan conflict has increased the efforts of Soviet citizens to dodge the draft. Even more than previously, Soviet youth, aided by their parents, resort to various strategems—legal and illegal—to evade induction.

According to US Embassy sources, parents of draft-age youths about to be called up were the main protestors against the Afghan war at the May demonstrations in Tbilisi and Yerevan. The small Soviet dissident "peace movement," while focusing largely on East-West disarmament issues, has given some attention to the war in Afghanistan.

The war is introducing larger numbers of young Soviets to drug abuse, involving hashish and to a lesser extent heroin. Soviet conscripts in Afghanistan barter clothing, gasoline, and occasionally even weapons for narcotics. Official Soviet data reportedly estimate the majority of Soviet conscripts in Afghanistan use drugs, and as they rotate out of Afghanistan some of them are carrying drugs and drug habits back to the USSR.

More important, the fighting may have damaged the regime's reputation internally:

- From 1945 until 1979 the regime kept the country at peace. This has been a very important source of domestic support among a population that suffered millions of casualties in World War II. Although the number of Soviet soldiers fighting in Afghanistan is small, involvement in a foreign war may have a negative symbolic and psychological effect on popular attitudes.

- Growing realization among the population that the Soviet media are not telling the whole story about the Afghan conflict may have increased public cynicism about official propaganda on other subjects as well, enlarging the regime's "credibility gap." 25X1

- Most important, the lack of Soviet success in the war and the pervasive sense among the population that it may drag on indefinitely may have contributed to an increase in pessimism about the Soviet future. 25X1

There are indications that the stalemate in Afghanistan has also been a source of tension and frustration within Soviet elites. There have been discontent within the KGB and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the course of the war. For example, in 1984 the first secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Kabul provided the US Charge there with a pessimistic appraisal of Soviet prospects in Afghanistan and said that he saw little chance for any fresh initiatives in policy toward Afghanistan from the Soviet leadership under Chernenko, because the situation made little difference to "an old man, sick in the Kremlin." 25X1

Dissatisfaction within the military officer corps has been especially evident.

many officers below the rank of general saw the involvement in Afghanistan as disastrous for the Soviet Union on strategic, economic, and moral grounds. 25X1

We believe that broad strategic considerations are likely to continue to override domestic costs in determining the course Moscow takes in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, popular and elite dissatisfaction with the war must be an important leadership concern. Such unhappiness hits the regime at a vital point, its resolve to use power effectively. It can influence wide segments of the population beyond those directly affected by the war, and it can especially affect the morale and performance of the military and the KGB.

Events in Poland. Developments in Poland during 1979-81, combining and interacting with the efforts of Pope John Paul II to defend the rights of religious believers throughout Eastern Europe, were closely followed by the Soviet population—especially in the western borderlands. Most Soviet citizens displayed ambivalent attitudes toward the Polish crisis. On the one hand, they admired Solidarity's audacity in challenging established authority; "the Polish workers took the party by the throat," as one admiring Soviet put it. Coexisting with this sentiment, however, was disdain for the "inability" of the "anarchic" Poles to "discipline" themselves and resentment that the Soviet Union appeared to be bankrolling a higher standard of living for Poles at the expense of Soviet consumers. Overall, Radio Liberty polling of Soviet citizens temporarily outside the USSR and other informal polling conducted inside the country indicated that about a third of the Soviet population had a favorable opinion of Solidarity and half an unfavorable opinion, with the remainder undecided. For non-Slavs the percentage having a favorable view was higher.

Neither the election of a Slavic pope nor developments inside Poland itself generated any large-scale unrest in the USSR, but there were some repercussions in the Baltic area and the Ukraine:

- In Estonia strikes and student demonstrations took place in 1980. Events in Poland, which Estonians followed on Finnish television, were said to have been a factor in stimulating these protests.

- Scattered strikes and student protests reportedly occurred in several places in the western Ukraine in 1980-82. Some of them were said to have expressed sympathy with Polish workers. this region indicated a high level of interest—especially among young people—in developments in Poland, which Ukrainians were able to follow by watching Polish television and by reading the Ukrainian-language newspaper put out by the Ukrainian minority in Poland and routinely smuggled into the USSR. At the same time, the election of a Slavic pope gave rise to hopes among Ukrainian Catholics—called Uniates—that the papacy would begin to assert itself more vigorously on their behalf (the Ukrainian Catholic Church, unlike many others, does not have legal standing in the USSR). A leading Ukrainian Catholic dissident reportedly sent an open letter to Lech Walesa praising him for his courage. 25X1

- In Lithuania, where the two most important external influences historically have been Poland and the Catholic Church, Catholics greeted the election of Pope John Paul with enthusiasm. A group of Lithuanian priests, who have long maintained clandestine contacts with the Polish hierarchy, formed a "Catholic Committee for the Defense of Rights of Believers" and sent a letter to the Pope asking his blessing for their cause. 25X1

In addition, some Soviet dissidents worked to disseminate materials from Poland. Moscow dissidents published the full text of the Gdansk agreements in samizdat, and an unofficial Soviet trade union formed by worker dissidents claimed to be in contact with Polish workers. 25X1

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Leadership Assessment of the Situation: Perceptions of Problems

The Soviet leadership's perceptions of problems in society and in the political system are in some ways more important than the problems themselves: they govern regime strategy. 25X1

There is good evidence that developments of recent years have led Soviet leaders to question the efficacy of Brezhnev's strategy for managing societal problems

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while pursuing economic and military modernization. Two fundamental questions have driven the official and private discussion and debate: How serious, threatening, and urgent is the internal situation? And is the regime able to remedy the situation, or would change prove more destabilizing than attempting to maintain the status quo?

Essentially, debate over these questions highlights the basic tension between the need for mobilizational leadership to rally society and the elite in the service of larger system goals (economic growth, military modernization, and social integration) and the need for tranquilizing leadership to satisfy popular demands at a minimal level and to protect elite stability and hegemony even at the expense of deferring more ambitious goals. It thus relates to the question of whether the leadership any longer has a strong commitment to long-range goals of moving the economy and the country forward, or has become so thoroughly effete, corrupt, and inert that it is motivated primarily by the narrower goal of self-preservation in the near term.

Awareness of Problems

To a certain extent, the isolation of top leaders from society may limit their awareness of internal problems. The leaders generally have no direct, spontaneous contact with the population. Surrounded by security even tighter than that for rulers in most other authoritarian states, Politburo members live, work, travel, shop, eat, and vacation in special facilities that provide no opportunity for firsthand observation of how the population at large lives. Gromyko's daughter once remarked that her father had literally not set foot on the streets of Moscow for 30 years. Gorbachev, by contrast, has tried to cultivate an image of a party leader in close touch with the public and fully aware of social problems. Although his highly publicized forays into the public arena have probably been carefully staged, they may also have sharpened his perspective on the societal situation.

The leadership depends on lower-level functionaries who must deal with problems on a day-to-day basis to provide them with information and assessments of the health of the society and the economy. However, though they themselves may know what the real conditions and problems are, there is a tendency on the part of many aides and lower officials to tell the leaders what they want to hear.

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Soviet leaders were sometimes fed edited reports that put the most favorable light on events.

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But Russian history and Marxist ideology have conditioned Soviet leaders to recognize the dangers of ignoring popular attitudes, and they are keenly interested in obtaining reliable information about developments in society. The leadership receives information through more than one channel and can, consequently, compare the assessments of alternative sources of information.

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There is no evidence, however, that the KGB comprehensively monitors societal attitudes and conditions. Rather, it probably confines its reporting to urgent situations and particularly serious incidents so that

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Elite Concerns About Corruption

High-level Soviet officials have exhibited an awareness of the extent and implications of corruption:

- *Yuriy Andropov told an August 1983 meeting of party veterans that "disorder, mismanagement, infringement of laws, money grabbing, and bribery devalue the work of . . . agitators and propagandists."*
- *In an interview published in* Literaturnaya Gazeta *in August 1984, MVD chief Fedorchuk suggested that corruption was undermining popular respect for law and order.*
- *First Deputy Premier Aliyev, in a 1984 speech, indicated that bribery and nepotism were undermining the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies, especially the corruption-ridden MVD.*
- *In remarks to a party ideology conference in December 1984, Gorbachev stated that "the party would become more cohesive and authoritative if we continued to rid ourselves of moral degenerates and those who do not value party principles and party honor."*
- *At the April 1985 plenum, Gorbachev stated that "where the promotion of workers is allowed on the basis of personal devotion, servility, or protectionism, there inevitably sets in . . . a weakening of ties with the masses."*

the leadership may not have a very good handle on the overall domestic scene or general understanding of its societal ills. 25X1

Whatever the difficulties in getting accurate information to the top and the problems in assessing it, reporting and public statements of Soviet leaders indicate considerable awareness that conditions giving rise to popular discontent grew stronger while regime instruments for maintaining internal stability and motivating the work force grew weaker in the last years of Brezhnev's life. Various officials have expressed apprehension that earlier inflated promises to the population unleashed and legitimized consumer demands, and that these demands have now become virtually insatiable. High-level officials have expressed a fear that the trend toward material acquisitiveness reflects a deeper trend toward disintegration of the social fabric. The Soviet Komsomol chief has warned that uncritical acceptance of Western cultural models and fashions can lead to "moral and spiritual decline." Andropov in a 1983 article stated that the preoccupation with private gain was "a consequence of the alienation of labor." 25X1

Regime spokesmen indicate awareness that, during a period of manpower shortages, the right of workers to change jobs has given them de facto power to bargain for higher wages and better working conditions. In a February 1982 article Chernenko stated that some citizens "understand free labor as freedom from labor or as freedom to labor when they like" and "abuse the humanism of Soviet society, which does not know such forms of compulsion as unemployment." 25X1

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Officials acknowledge that increased contacts with the urban population has had a profound and unsettling effect on the attitudes and expectations of the peasantry. In his Lenin anniversary speech in 1983, Gorbachev acknowledged the link between poor rural living conditions and migration to cities. 25X1

Some leaders publicly express concern that the "stability of cadres" has sapped the party's vitality and damaged its image. At the April 1985 plenum

Gorbachev acknowledged that "in their letters to the Central Committee, Communists draw attention to the fact that certain leaders, occupying the same posts for a long time, frequently stop seeing the new and get used to shortcomings."

Soviet media reports of a Politburo meeting at which the alcohol problem was discussed referred to alcoholism as a "monstrous phenomenon." MVD chief Fedorchuk in two recent interviews described the problem in alarmist terms, and a Central Committee resolution of May 1985 stated categorically that "the problem of drunkenness and alcoholism has worsened within the country in recent years." Soviet officials, such as former Georgian party boss Eduard Shevardnadze (now Foreign Minister) and his successor, Dzhumbar Patiashvili, have also acknowledged publicly the existence of a drug problem in the USSR.

Some officials have hinted at concern that patriotism has weakened. High-level military spokesmen, including the Defense Minister and the Chief of the General Staff, have in recent years decried with unusual fervor the growth of pacifist tendencies among young people. Concern about military morale problems was manifested in a speech the Soviet Defense Minister gave to a meeting of high-ranking military officials in 1982 and in the 1983 revision of military criminal law to stiffen penalties for lapses in discipline. It is also evident in reporting about conditions in Afghanistan

Andropov

Publicly, in an August 1983 speech, he stated that "instances of parasitism, labor and social passivity, indiscipline," and "petit bourgeois ways" had become characteristic of "a certain sector of youth." Gorbachev has expressed concern that youth "have become accustomed to comparing our reality, not with the past, but with the highest criteria of socialism," and warned against assuming that young people will assimilate their parents' social mores and work habits. Chernenko admitted that "a certain sector of young people shun active work in the Komsomol," that "numerous campaigns are losing their attraction for young people," and that "young people have quite a few social problems."

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Soviet spokesmen have publicly expressed concern that the regime has become too "permissive" in dealing with the population and that police repression has lost some of its credibility as a means of social control. Gorbachev in his 1983 Lenin Anniversary speech stated that "antisocial manifestations are fed not least by illusions of total permissibility and impunity." Various officials, including MVD chief Fedorchuk in a 1984 interview, have acknowledged that the overall crime rate is rising in many parts of the country and that juvenile crime, in particular, has risen sharply.

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There is ample evidence of official concern that religion is attracting larger numbers of people. Though not providing statistics, *Pravda* has acknowledged increased interest in religion among youth and pointed to the failure of party organs, the media, schools, and youth organizations to meet the "religious threat."

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Officials also acknowledge that some non-Russian nationalities are becoming more assertive. Over the past few years the regime publicly retreated on plans for increased linguistic Russification in Georgia and Armenia, in the face of large popular demonstrations, and made concessions to the national interests of Abkhazians (an ethnic minority in Soviet Georgia) protesting over job discrimination and other grievances.

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Perceived Costs and Threats

Many leaders recognize that the regime pays a heavy economic price for social maladies and attendant low public and elite morale. Because of the perceived need to maintain improvement in consumption levels, or at least to prevent a decline in consumption, scarce resources are diverted to the Food Program and nearly one-half of hard currency purchases abroad are for agricultural commodities. Indeed, we estimate the Soviets spent $45-50 billion in hard currency on grain imports during the period 1981-85 to maintain food consumption levels. At the June 1985 conference on science and technology, Gorbachev openly acknowledged that "society is faced with urgent tasks in the area of food supplies . . . and goods and services for the population" and said that "political" considerations ruled out any cutback on social programs.

Many Soviet leaders argue that the trend toward wage leveling, combined with price controls and the absence of quality goods to purchase, has reduced the effectiveness of wage incentives and caused workers to shirk their jobs in order to shop. In a 1983 *Kommunist* article, Andropov stated that increasing wages without taking sufficient account of labor contributions "has a negative effect on economic life generally" by "engendering demands that cannot be fully satisfied" and "hampering steps to eliminate shortages." Gorbachev stated in a December 1984 speech that deficient services were causing workers to "waste one of our main riches—time, including working time," and that "the imbalance of supply and demand engenders negative phenomena of an economic and moral nature."

Leaders also acknowledge that morale problems among workers become more important in a period when the regime is counting on increased productivity to make up for tight resources. Gorbachev emphasized at the April 1985 plenum that as the economy matures the role of "social factors" and working conditions in spurring technological innovation and raising efficiency grows rather than diminishes in importance. 25X1 25X1

Gorbachev stressed in a December 1984 speech that the second economy is creating a rival marketplace to which human and material resources are diverted. Workers moonlight, spending more time and energy on their second jobs and, as Eduard Shevardnadze has stated, the salaries of workers in some sectors are mere "appendages" to their black-market earnings. Gorbachev has acknowledged that people steal materials from their enterprises in order to sell them on the black market or use them in the burgeoning unofficial service industry. 25X1

Similarly, some officials have acknowledged that through corruption the state coffers are robbed of revenue that passes to private hands and leads to the accumulation of personal fortunes. First Deputy Premier Aliyev has publicly said that corruption is partly responsible for chronic economic shortfalls. Central officials may also fear that the deliberate inflation of production data by provincial officials attempting to conceal illegalities skews overall economic statistics, and in this way complicates planning and threatens to undermine central direction and regulation of the economy. 25X1 25X1

Although many Soviet leaders may be immediately and primarily concerned about the adverse effect of low public and elite morale on economic performance, some leaders are also worried about the possibility of a challenge to political control developing. Andropov, Chernenko, and Gorbachev have all stated in public speeches that internal problems, if unattended or mishandled, could spiral out of control and produce social "collisions" or a political "crisis." Various other Soviet officials, in discussions with foreigners over the past several years, have characterized the internal situation in the USSR as one of "crisis," particularly in the early 1980s. In 1981, for example, a Soviet source told US Embassy officers that a Central Committee official had said the country was in a state of "political and economic crisis." A USA Institute 25X1

official told a US official in 1982 that Soviet society faced a "major crisis in discipline." There are indications of leadership concern that the regime could be threatened either by popular unrest or by elite fragmentation.

Over the past few years, Soviet leaders have seemed more apprehensive about the potential for popular unrest than at any time since the period immediately following Stalin's death.[10] The following reports illustrate these concerns:

- In 1982 a USA Institute (IUSAC) official told a US official that there was a great deal of unrest in non-Russian republics and that the Soviet population is "disgusted, unhappy, indifferent, and inert."

- widespread concern that popular discontent could build up to the point that "an incident could at some stage unleash a crisis." the cohesion and discipline of Soviet society had weakened in recent years. If unrest broke out, "this could make it very difficult for the authorities to regain control of the situation."

Reinforcing this disquietude about the mood of the masses is concern about the political reliability of the intelligentsia. Soviet authorities probably fear that the small group of active dissidents represents latent opposition on a large scale within the intelligentsia. Both Chernenko and Andropov publicly expressed concern that the Soviet intelligentsia was receptive to Eurocommunist ideas. Moreover, some leaders fear a convergence of popular grievances over living conditions and the protests of intellectual dissidents over strictures on human rights.

At the same time, although there is little direct evidence, it is reasonable to assume that some leaders may be concerned about the possibility of a threat to regime cohesion arising within the system itself:

[10] Elite concern about public disorders appears to coexist with concern about popular passivity. On the surface, these concerns may appear logically inconsistent. Apathy, it may be argued, produces economic problems for the regime because a completely placid work force is not likely to be very productive, but does not create political problems in the sense of producing unrest. This apparent ambiguity in elite attitudes, however, has strong antecedents in Russian history. Russian elites, both in czarist times and in the Soviet era, have feared that the population's inertia and alienation from the state could be transformed into spontaneous eruptions of unrest. Several Western studies of Soviet society during the late Stalin period also contended that the typical character of the Russian lower classes was one that fluctuated sharply between passivity and violent revolt against authority. In fact, the pattern of Russian social history suggests that these perceptions of Soviet elites and Western scholars have not been entirely erroneous. Over the centuries, lengthy periods of resigned quiescence on the part of the masses have been punctuated periodically by social upheavals.

- Heightened elite pessimism about the future may have produced apprehension at the top that a genuine crisis of confidence and a loss of nerve could develop within officialdom. Soviet leaders are especially sensitive to the possibility of such a development, which Lenin regarded as a crucial element in the onset of a classic "revolutionary situation."

- In view of mounting friction between different elements of the elite—both self-interested conflict over privilege and position and bureaucratic debate over policy issues and resource allocations—some party leaders may fear that counterelites could emerge along institutional, generational, or ethnic lines.

- Statements of some leaders have hinted at concern about a systemic crisis.

In a May 1985 speech, Gorbachev acknowledged that "questions arise . . . about the effectiveness of party work, party activity, and party leadership—questions concerning the capability of the party at this turning point in the development of our society to take upon itself the resolution of fresh tasks, to be able to raise our people and our cadre, and to put the whole system of our socialist democracy at the service" of pressing tasks.

In particular, party leaders are concerned to guard against any move on the part of the military to assert itself politically—either in an effort to preserve or extend military budgetary priorities or to save the party from its own errors and weaknesses—as happened in Poland:

- An article by Andropov aide Fedor Burlatsky in 1983 used allegory to warn against military meddling in political decisionmaking.

- The circumstances of the demotion of General Staff Chief Ogarkov in 1984 suggested that his removal may have been related to leadership malaise and tensions in party-military relations. In his speeches Ogarkov had delicately expressed concern about the quality and capabilities of the top civilian leadership and indirectly raised questions about the adequacy of command and control arrangements at the top. he was keenly concerned that Soviet industry lacked the capability to compete in a high-technology arms race and was consequently pushing for introduction of a better incentive structure to spur innovation in the economy.

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Foreign Factors

There is also abundant evidence of increased concern within the Soviet establishment about the USSR's vulnerability to outside pressures and influences. Many officials are worried about the impact on Soviet society of contact with the West, and particularly about what they see as stepped-up efforts by the current US administration to undermine the Soviet Union internally.

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Since the US grain embargo after the invasion of Afghanistan, there have been signs that some Soviet officials—particularly Academy of Sciences President Anatoliy Aleksandrov—were uncomfortable with excessive dependence on Western imports and technology, fearing that the country could become hostage to external pressure. Gorbachev, moreover, stated at the June 1985 conference on science and technology that "we cannot permit our country to depend upon deliveries from Western output," adding that "the experience of recent years has taught us a great deal."

Officials in the western borderlands, including the party first secretary in Estonia, have in recent years devoted unusual attention in their speeches to warning their populations about the seductive power of Western radiobroadcasting. The Soviets have undertaken an active measures campaign against Radio Liberty in Munich and issued a tough decree on controlling local nationalism abetted by "alien" ideas being broadcast by foreign media.

Andropov stated in a 1983 article that "our society is developing not in hothouse conditions, not in isolation from hostile surroundings," but in conditions of "psychological war unleashed by imperialism." Chernenko charged "imperialism" with planning, financing, and coordinating within NATO a "qualitatively new" effort to "undermine the unity of workers and the party."

In fact, a Soviet official with apparent connections to the KGB told US Embassy officials in June 1981 that a recent Kremlin study had concluded that unrestricted travel for Soviet citizens would result in massive defections to the West. A June 1985 *Kommunist* article by KGB chief Chebrikov charged the US administration with attempting to "exert a corrosive influence on the awareness of working people" and to "shake the ideological foundations of society" with the aim of "bringing about internal erosion." Central Committee "second" secretary Ligachev, in a December 1985 speech, criticized Soviet propagandists for failing to counter Western influences effectively. 25X1

There have been indications of concern that the United States is trying to subvert the USSR by driving up the ante in military spending to bleed the Soviet economy, although the regime may be putting out this line for political purposes. 25X1

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The war in Afghanistan has fed official concerns about the population's vulnerability to foreign influences. 25X1 elite apprehension that events in Afghanistan and the broader resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East have made the USSR's Muslim population more restive. 25X1

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More than any other external development, the crisis in Poland has brought home to Soviet elites the potentially disastrous consequences of an attitude of equanimity toward societal problems. Events in Poland created fears of direct spillover of unrest into the USSR and, more important, focused the attention of

[11] Institute for the World Economy and International Relations. 25X1

Soviet officials on analogous internal Soviet conditions that could create problems for them quite apart from any contagion from Poland. Since many Soviet officials are far from convinced that the Polish crisis has been resolved, seeing massive discontent simmering beneath the surface calm, Poland remains a continuing specter and a continuing stimulus to the Soviet elite thinking about how to prevent an unraveling of the situation in the USSR.

Kommunist editor Richard Kosolapov indirectly acknowledged in a 1984 article that events in Poland provided the chief catalyst for debate within the Soviet elite about the prospects for popular unrest and systemic crisis in the USSR. He said that Poland was the "spark" for the ongoing discussion of "contradictions" in socialist society (see inset). Some of the protagonists in this debate, including Kosolopov and *Kommunist* deputy editor Yevgeniy Bugayev, have argued that circumstances in Poland are qualitatively different from the situation in the USSR and that the Polish crisis consequently has no relevance for Soviet domestic policy. Others, including some top Soviet leaders, have disagreed:

- Academy of Science officials Anatoliy Butenko and Yevgeniy Ambartsumov have been in the forefront of party theoreticians who maintain that the situation in Poland has profound implications for the USSR. Butenko has set forth his view in a series of articles on "contradictions," and Ambartsumov has argued in various articles that the lessons of Poland indicate the need for major economic reforms to move toward greater privatization of the Soviet system.

- In his report to the 1981 party congress, Brezhnev said that "the events in Poland persuade us anew how important it is for the party and for the strengthening of its leading role to responsively heed the voice of the masses, struggle emphatically against all manifestations of bureaucratism and voluntarism, actively develop socialist democracy, and pursue a weighed, realistic policy in foreign economic relations."

- Chernenko, referring in a 1981 *Kommunist* article to the above statement, added that "disregard for the interests of any class or group" is "fraught with the danger of social tension and political and socio-economic crisis."

The Soviet Debate Over "Contradictions" in Socialist Society

Over the last several years there has been a public debate within the Soviet elite, including the top leaders, over the nature of "contradictions" in socialist society. In this seemingly abstruse ideological debate over the definition and implications of "contradictions" and the circumstances under which "nonantagonistic" contradictions can become "antagonistic," Soviet spokesmen are arguing about the potential for and significance of societal unrest in the USSR, including the possibility that social problems can trigger major elite conflict as well. 25X1

The protagonists in this debate have disagreed on several fundamental points, which could have significant policy implications:

- *Whether Soviet internal stresses are festering long-term problems or explosive phenomena capable of spiraling out of control and rapidly taking on crisis dimensions.*

- *Whether and to what extent the phenomena that produced unrest in Poland exist in the USSR.*

- *Whether the conflicts that exist in the USSR are due merely to "vestiges of capitalism" that can be expected to erode over time and can be dealt with through "administrative" measures (for example, police action), or whether they are endemic to socialist society itself and call for reform measures.*

- *Whether internal Soviet problems are because of "subjective errors" (policy failures) and consequently can be remedied through policy and personnel change.*

- *Whether policy change, which will produce increased conflict in the short run, is to be preferred to stasis in policy, which represses conflict in the near term but may build up pressures that will disrupt the system in the long run.* 25X1

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Poland's Problems Through Soviet Eyes

Speeches of Soviet officials, [redacted] *and the logic of the situation suggest that several developments in Poland are relevant to the USSR and have caused concern within the Soviet elite:*

- *The Polish party's degeneration into a corrupt, parasitical stratum preoccupied above all with maintaining its privileges, and its resulting estrangement from the population.* [redacted]
- *The party's inherent weakness and vulnerability to a military "coup."* [redacted]
- *The Polish party's encouragement of consumer expectations through reliance not on ideological commitment but on a type of "goulash communism" as a means of winning popular acceptance, and the party's failure to meet these expectations.*
- *The official trade union's lack of credibility as a representative of worker interests.*
- *The Polish regime's misreading of public opinion and misdiagnosis of the situation, partly because of deficient mechanisms for monitoring the popular mood.*
- *The deceptive calm in society before the onset of protest, the process by which seemingly minor incidents touched off major unrest, and the rapidity with which the party's authority collapsed.*
- *The convergence of worker and intellectual protest activity.*
- *The dependence of the Polish regime on foreign imports and its consequent vulnerability (in Soviet eyes) to Western manipulation and pressure. Gorbachev has charged "imperialists" with "organizing a crusade" involving economic sanctions and "the nurturing of counterrevolutionary fifth columns, as for example, in Poland."*
- *The key role of the Church as a unifying force providing support to the liberalization process.* [redacted]

[redacted] *Soviet propagandists in the Ukraine have complained about the favorable attitude toward the Uniates displayed by the Pope, who defied the Soviet ban on the Uniate Church and sent its head a letter of support. Following the Pope's rumored appointment of the imprisoned Archbishop of Lithuania to be a cardinal in pectore (in secret), the head of the Communist Party in Lithuania charged "clerical extremists" with using religion to promote nationalist sentiments.* [redacted]

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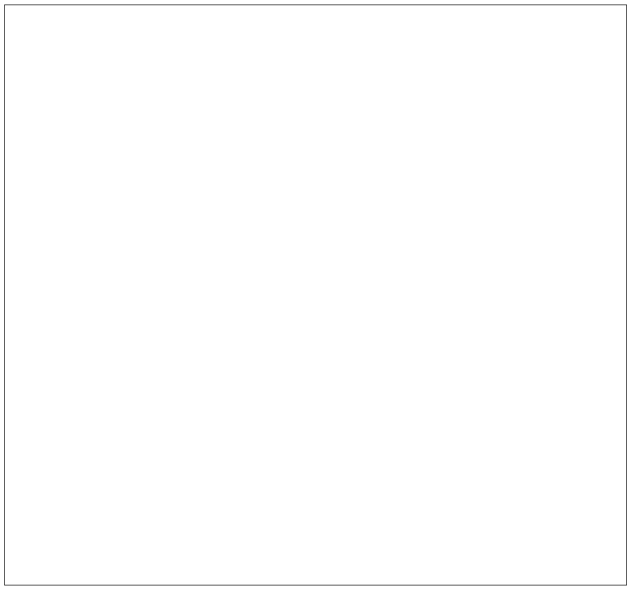
[redacted]



While these aspects or perceived aspects of the Polish situation seized the attention of Soviet elites, not all officials agreed about their relative importance in bringing about the crisis. For example, some officials—including then party secretary Mikhail Suslov— seemed to believe the chief lesson of Poland was that the party must not lose its ideological bearings and cater to consumer interests. For others, the chief lesson appeared to be that the party must maintain unity with the people precisely by taking care to satisfy consumer demand. But whatever specific conclusions various officials reached, the events in Poland heightened Soviet elite sensitivities to problems in Soviet society.

Passive Approach: The Brezhnev-Chernenko Stance

While Soviet leaders in general seem keenly aware of domestic problems, in recent years there appear to have been two basic views about the nature of these problems and about how the regime should deal with them. One view might be labeled the passive approach. This passive or evasive approach was essentially that of Brezhnev, but Chernenko seemed to share it in the main. It is impossible to know for certain why both men failed to deal vigorously with accumulated problems, but it seems likely that they did not believe domestic stresses were fundamentally threatening to the regime, that they were pessimistic about the regime's ability to do much about these problems, and that they were apprehensive about the negative consequences of embarking on a bold attempt to do so. 25X1 25X1

Although direct evidence is lacking, those leaders with a passive approach probably believed that many otherwise negative phenomena had compensating positive virtues. They may have hoped that:

- Corruption and job security essentially serve as an extension of the system of privileges that enabled the regime to "buy off" elite groups.
- The black market and the second economy help to keep the system running by satisfying consumer demand for products and services the official economy does not supply. It could be argued that the pervasiveness of illegal economic activity makes it easier for the regime to keep people in line politically. Since almost everyone engages in illegal economic activity, almost everyone feels vulnerable to police action or legal prosecution and consequently less inclined to challenge political authority.
- Alcohol consumption dampens popular demand for consumer goods in short supply. Vodka serves as a substitute consumer good, which the state can produce cheaply but, as a major revenue-enhancing method, sell at high prices. Alcohol also provides a politically innocuous escape valve for the frustrations of people lacking other recreational outlets or relief from the tedium and hardships of daily life. Especially in depressed rural areas, it serves as an "opiate" for the people. 25X1
- Similarly, religion, jazz, and other aspects of unofficial culture channel popular energies into apolitical activities. 25X1

Brezhnev and Chernenko may also have believed that vigorous measures to redress internal problems would only make matters worse. They may have feared that:

- Going too far in attacking corruption, or moving precipitately to jettison the "stability of cadres" policy, could alienate elites whose support is the foundation of regime rule. Chernenko warned against any large-scale shakeup or "persecution" of cadres and against any move to pit younger party officials against the old guard.

- Public exposure of corruption and other failures of the system could have the effect of damaging the regime's reputation in the eyes of the masses even more than corruption itself does. Chernenko repeatedly warned against "dramatizing shortcomings" and "belittling" achievements on the grounds that "unprincipled" criticism would play into the hands of "bourgeois" propagandists and internal critics.

- Going too far toward changing the incentive structure in favor of more differentiated wages, removing the workers' social security blanket, providing incentives for managers to release redundant labor, or making it more difficult for workers to change jobs could touch off widespread worker unrest.

- Draconian steps to curb alcohol abuse could also provoke labor protest, as well as deprive the state of a major source of revenue.

- Opening up channels of communication from the population to officials, in order to better anticipate problems and manipulate public opinion, could stir up criticism and lead to social turmoil.

- Undertaking any major economic reforms or reordering of resource allocation priorities would heighten tension within the elite.

- Unleashing police repression would provoke opposition from party and military elites who remember the purge years and fear a resurgence of KGB power could threaten their well-being.

It was presumably such an assessment that led Chernenko to warn in 1984 against reaching for "unattainable even if attractive ends" and to be extremely cautious about departing from the main policy line of the Brezhnev period. Thus, Chernenko insisted that new policy decisions must be "tested" and "well weighed" and repeatedly stressed the need for policy continuity with the Brezhnev leadership. 25X1

Active Approach: The Andropov-Gorbachev Line

The dominant trend in elite opinion, however, has been toward a more alarmist appraisal of domestic problems and toward advocacy of more activist measures for dealing with them. The general tone of the speeches of Andropov and Gorbachev, and many of their particular statements, indicate that they shared this general orientation. Those with such an activist approach probably believe that during the late Brezhnev period the mood of the population underwent a qualitative change for the worse, that escape valves for popular frustrations are rapidly becoming peril points, and that so many areas of life are slipping beyond the regime's regulation that a threat to overall control could develop. They probably also believe that the elite itself has become dangerously independent from central manipulation, that the regime is in a crisis of effectiveness that could lead to a crisis of stability, and that, even short of a threat to stability, the economic costs of societal problems have become intolerable. Such an outlook is apparently accompanied in some cases by a tendency to blame the inertia of policy in Brezhnev's last years for adverse developments in the country and by a belief that in the end Brezhnev succeeded neither in satisfying popular desires nor in tightening controls over a population that had become more demanding, less believing, and less pliable than at any time in the postwar period. Blaming the previous leader is the traditional way to avoid blaming the system, and Gorbachev in his first year in office has more and more taken this line, with Brezhnev and Chernenko as his explicit targets of criticism. 25X1

Gorbachev, especially, has articulated concern that internal problems have reached a critical stage and displayed a high level of commitment to following through with a program of action to arrest negative trends. He has portrayed the present period as a "turning point." At the April 1985 plenum he stated 25X1

that "the historic fate of the country and the position of socialism in the modern world depend to a large extent on how we manage things . . . in the present extremely important segment of history." Comparing the present situation to the early years of Soviet power under Lenin, when the regime struggled to survive under siege from domestic and foreign enemies, he recalled Lenin's admonition to deal with "maladies" in a determined fashion but without "panic." He has also compared the internal tasks confronting the regime today to the challenges of industrialization and collectivization in the 1930s, when the regime had to achieve in a decade "what other countries had covered in a hundred years" in order not to "find itself in a critical situation."

A tone of urgency about the internal situation pervades Gorbachev's speeches:

- In his March 1984 election speech, he set the tone of his stewardship by praising Andropov for understanding "urgent problems" and flatly stated that "there is no other way, nor will there be any" other than the adoption of stringent measures to raise productivity.

- In his May 1985 speech in Leningrad, he stated: "We have to traverse a long road but in a short space of time" and explained that a "tranquil life" was not possible because "history is not giving us an opportunity . . . for this."

- At the April 1985 plenum, he stressed that "there are . . . tasks that cannot be put to one side, tasks that require special attention."

- At his April 1985 meeting with managers, he urged stepping up measures to stimulate the economy "without delay" and passing "from talk to practical actions."

- At the June 1985 conference on science and technology, he spoke of the "radical change" in the economic situation and stated that "none of the problems we must solve today can be put off until tomorrow. . . . There must be no delay, no waiting, because there is no time left for warming up—it was exhausted by the past."

Gorbachev's impatience with the current state of affairs was also reflected in a remark he made in dressing down RSFSR officials in September 1984 for inefficiency in supplying fuel to public utilities and consumer enterprises. At a meeting of a Politburo commission investigating fuel delivery problems, Gorbachev reportedly said that "a government incapable of ensuring adequate fuel deliveries to the people . . . does not have a right to exist."

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Gorbachev, like Andropov, evidently attributes the current adverse state of affairs in large measure to past policy mistakes. Both men almost directly but not by name blamed the Brezhnev leadership for failing to sense that domestic problems had become so acute as to require a new, bolder approach. In his August 1983 speech to party veterans, for example, Andropov stated that "the fact that we have not been searching for ways to solve the new tasks with enough vigor is clearly a factor" in not moving to redress the situation. He went on to say that "we have often taken half measures and have been unable to overcome the accumulated inertia with sufficient speed. We must now make up for omissions." (Statements by Gorbachev on this subject are recounted in the inset.)

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In their speeches both Andropov and Gorbachev seem to argue that temporizing compromises and piecemeal measures designed to avoid societal and elite conflict in the short term run the risk of building up pressures that could erupt into a more threatening conflict at a later stage. Thus, they urge a comprehensive and frontal attack on domestic problems. In anticipation of criticism that such a "biting of the bullet" will prove contentious, they argue in effect that surface consensus is the companion of paralysis, while some degree of controversy is the engineer of progress and the means of preventing a crisis down the road.

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Thus, in his 1983 *Kommunist* article, Andropov said that "a narrow pragmatic" approach influenced by "time-serving considerations" is "fraught with grave political and ideological consequences." He quoted Lenin's statement that "anybody who tackles partial problems without having previously settled general

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Gorbachev on the Need for Change

Over the past year or so, General Secretary Gorbachev on numerous occasions has emphasized the need for change and a clean break with past policies:

- *At the December 1984 ideology conference, he said that "the slowdown in economic growth in the late 1970s and early 1980s can be explained not only by the coincidence of a number of unfavorable factors but also by the fact that the need for changes . . . was not detected in a timely fashion."*
- *At the April 1985 plenum, he said that "the main reason" for the domestic difficulties facing the country was that the need for changes was not appraised in the required "way at the right time and, what is especially important, there was no urgency displayed." He also implicitly criticized Chernenko for neglecting to strengthen law and order, noting that "it has to be bluntly stated that of late the attention given to this most important question has lessened somewhat."*
- *In his April 1985 speech to managers, he said that there were "both objective and subjective" reasons for the disappointing economic results of the 1981-85 Plan, and that "lack of organization, at times equanimity, and here and there irresponsibility" played a considerable role.*
- *At the June 1985 science and technology conference, Gorbachev said that the "main reason" for having to speed up social and economic development was that "a proper assessment" had not been made of the situation. He said that "for many years there has been talk" of redressing the situation but that "the measures adopted were half measures, inconsistent measures, and were not implemented to the full . . . thanks to inertia."*

problems will . . . come up against those general problems without himself realizing it. To come up against them blindly in each individual case means to doom one's policies to the worst vacillations and lack of principle." He went on to criticize the "oversimplified naive idea" that socialism is free of any "contradictions," since "to think there may be some other way of development is to . . . break with the ABCs of Marxist dialectics." He said that "the most important aspect of the matter is to use correctly the contradictions of socialism as a source and stimulus of its forward development." 25X1

Gorbachev voiced a similar point of view at the December 1984 party ideology conference. He said that failure to take the initiative in confronting "contradictions may result in a worsening of the economic and social situation." Instead of ignoring the interests of different societal groups, Gorbachev argues, the regime must address them in order to prevent their "perversion" and "degeneration" into opposition to the interests of the regime. By encouraging an attempt to divert conflict into "progressive" channels, rather than suppressing it, Gorbachev appears to be seeking ways to manage and defuse social tensions. 25X1

Regime Response to Domestic Problems: Charting Policy and Strategy

Two factors have been at work in shaping regime strategy for dealing with domestic problems over the last several years. First, the leadership as a whole—including Brezhnev, in his waning years, and Chernenko—became more concerned about societal stresses and more inclined to experiment with new ways of managing them. Second, within the leadership those with an activist orientation—including Andropov and Gorbachev—increasingly came to play a larger role in decisionmaking. 25X1

Although elements of a changed and more urgent approach began to emerge in 1979, Brezhnev's death gave impetus to major policy initiatives under Andropov. Although Chernenko's tenure was essentially an interregnum during which the leadership seemed to be marking time, Gorbachev appears to have picked up where Andropov left off in defining a coherent program for rejuvenating and strengthening the system and acting forcefully to implement it. 25X1 25X1

Despite many inconsistencies and waverings in Soviet domestic policy during the period since 1979—the product of controversy and indecision among Soviet leaders about how to deal with accumulated problems as well as uncertainty about the course of succession—there have been several central lines of policy development. The leadership has attempted to:

- Tighten discipline across the board by enforcing higher performance standards for both workers and officials, moving to reduce official corruption, strengthening law enforcement agencies, employing even sterner measures than previously to suppress dissent, taking steps to limit Western influences on Soviet society, and embarking on a campaign to curtail alcohol consumption.

- Shore up its legitimacy and combat popular cynicism by working to make propaganda more credible, appearing more responsive to public opinion, attacking corruption more vigorously, and more openly exploiting Russian nationalism as a prop to the system.

- Satisfy consumer interests through a Food Program and, under Gorbachev, by unveiling a long-term Consumer Goods and Services Program.

- Enhance the image of the Politburo and, under Andropov and Gorbachev, to reinvigorate the system by advancing the careers of able younger officials at the expense of older and less competent individuals.

Personnel Renewal

The regime has moved rapidly to bring new blood into the leadership and into the elite as a whole since Brezhnev's death. Between November 1982 and the eve of the February 1986 party congress:

- Two-thirds of the full members of the Politburo either died or were dropped.
- Half of the members of the Secretariat died or were replaced.
- Over one-third of the members of the Central Committee elected in 1981 died or lost the positions that entitled them to Central Committee membership.
- Over half of the CPSU Central Committee department chiefs were replaced, and nearly half of the USSR ministries received new heads.
- Nearly two-thirds of all regional party first secretaries and half of the republic first secretaries and republic premiers were changed.

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Gorbachev, who now has a working majority within the Politburo and Secretariat, has particularly escalated the pace of cadre changes. He is using personnel changes to achieve several interrelated objectives: to expand his base of support within the elite, tighten central control over the bureaucracy, restore the integrity and effectiveness of the system, shore up the regime's reputation, and create the preconditions for policy change. These purposes are reflected in the attributes of personnel recently promoted:

- Youth and vigor now appear to count for more than seniority in promotions. The long-delayed transfer of power from one generation of the elite to another is now proceeding rapidly, and changes at the top are countering the popular image of the Politburo as a gerontocracy bereft of new ideas.

- A "clean" record has become a criterion for advancement. Gorbachev said in a December 1984 speech that the party would become more united and authoritative if it eliminated "moral degenerates" from its ranks. He is attempting to make sobriety and probity prerequisites for officeholding, to create both the reality and the appearance of a less corrupt officialdom.

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- Gorbachev is placing a high priority on technical competence and openness to innovation. He has publicly warned that those who cannot attune themselves to change must "get out of the way."

- Loyalty to the leader and discipline in complying with central directives have become more important. Gorbachev is supplanting regional elites resistant to pressure from the center with men who owe their jobs directly to him.

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he intends to pursue a "horizontal" cadres policy

reminiscent of the Khrushchev years, in which officials are transferred from one region to another as well as from the central apparatus to the provinces to break up networks of corrupt officials and to prevent the formation of local loyalties.

Law Enforcement, Labor Discipline, and Anticorruption

Since Brezhnev's death the law enforcement apparatus—including the MVD, the Procuracy, and the Party Control Committee—have been made more effective and brought more tightly under the regime's control. The KGB's political weight has increased, a campaign to strengthen worker discipline and to curtail official corruption has gained momentum, and revisions in the law have stiffened penalties for criminal offenses and violations of military discipline.

The MVD has been thoroughly purged. The removal and disgrace in late 1982 of MVD chief Nikolay Shchelokov, an especially corrupt official who had kept his position because of personal ties to Brezhnev, was followed by wholesale removals at all levels of the ministry. Numerous fired officials have been sentenced for crimes of corruption and abuse of office, and 55,000 new personnel have been brought into the organization over a four-year period. The ministry has been restructured to increase efficiency and reliability. Administrative subdivisions have been reduced, links between departments responsible for different types of criminal investigations have been strengthened, the number of district inspectors has been increased, and political watchdog units have been created to oversee the operations of the scandal-ridden ministry. In early 1986 Fedorchuk was replaced as Minister of Internal Affairs by Alexander Vlasov, a longtime party official who in 1984 was assigned to oversee a purge in the corruption-ridden Rostov region.

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Brezhnev's heirs have energized the Party Control Committee, which had atrophied under a superannuated chief during Brezhnev's tenure. In 1984 a special Central Committee conference on party control, the first since the Khrushchev era, revealed that regional control commissions were being expanded and strengthened. The new head of the Control Committee—Politburo member and former RSFSR Premier Mikhail Solomentsev—has defined the committee's responsibility more broadly than previously, to include not only exposing shortcomings but also overseeing the implementation of measures to remedy them. To ensure that planned measures are carried out, he has advocated that party control representatives participate in meetings of party committee bureaus and ministry collegiums. The media has begun to publicize disciplinary actions taken by the Control Committee against deviant and delinquent party members.

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In 1985 a Supreme Soviet resolution ordered the Procuracy to take a series of steps to upgrade its performance. It was instructed to exercise closer supervision of the entire criminal justice process, cease the suppression of statistics on crime, devote more resources to crime prevention, and improve legal education and training for Procuracy officials.

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These measures to bolster the criminal justice apparatus have been accompanied by a general assault on corruption. Building on the measures started by his political mentor, Yuriy Andropov, Gorbachev has revived the campaign against corruption and made it a major program of his regime. The anticorruption campaign has netted a significant number of high-level officials, and at lower levels the impact has been enormous.

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Beyond the attack on corruption within the elite, the regime has begun to give more attention to combating violent crime and economic crime within society at large. Effective 1 January 1983, the most extensive revisions of the post-Stalin criminal codes since their inception in 1960 went into effect. For example, in the Russian Republic code—the model for all other union republics—133 of the 246 articles were amended in December 1982. The most heavily amended chapters covered crimes against public and "personal" or private property. A series of decrees have stiffened

Figure 9. Cracking down on crime. *The USSR MVD head in 1984 noted that 40 percent of all losses of railroad freight are due to thefts. Half of all thefts are made from unguarded trains. Every day 700 to 900 trains stand unguarded on sidings and between stations. This cartoon from* Krokodil *(February 1986) shows a people's court sitting in a freight car and catching theives in the act.*

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penalties for a wide range of offenses—including vagrancy, "hooliganism" (disorderly behavior), theft of state property, motor vehicle crimes, and crimes by recidivists.

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The regime has worked to mobilize public opinion and citizen involvement in fighting crime. The number of *druzhiny*, groups of private citizens who patrol the streets and pick up vagrants and vandals, has increased to over 280,000. About 50,000 public centers for the protection of order have been set up in housing districts, and almost 150,000 crime prevention councils have been formed within enterprises. The right of self-defense has been expanded, and the regime is encouraging anonymous informing on lawbreakers through such initiatives as a "turn-in-your-neighbor" campaign in Kiev. At the same time, the reinvigorated MVD has extended its neighborhood patrols and set up call boxes in train stations and other locations. A June 1985 Central Committee conference discussed other measures that may be taken in response to Gorbachev's call for an "implacable struggle" against street crime.

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Military criminal law has also been revised to stiffen penalties for lapses in discipline, breaches in rules for handling weapons, unauthorized absences, and theft of military materials. Soviet media have reported investigations of corruption in military material and technical supply activities. Moscow has also acted to tighten the rules on draft deferments in an effort to block those seeking ways to evade serving in Afghanistan.

In labor policy, the regime has moved cautiously since 1979, and especially since Brezhnev's death, toward increasing both penalties for poor worker performance and rewards for productive workers. Most important, it has moved to implement a new form of labor organization. A 1979 decree set up a system of worker brigades—small groups of workers whose earnings depend on fulfillment of contractual obligations to management—and a 1983 resolution decreed that the brigades be adopted on a nationwide basis.

The basic advantage of the brigade system from the regime's point of view is that it provides greater incentives for labor output and offers the possibility of bringing peer pressure to bear on laggards. On the negative side, the brigades create a quasi-legitimate basis for workers to discuss among themselves their rights and obligations vis-a-vis management. If not carefully supervised, they could provide an organizational nucleus for workers to deal collectively with managers.

In addition to extending the brigade system, in 1983 the regime announced a decree on labor discipline that provided for the manipulation of housing allocations, bonuses, and vacations to discourage absenteeism, tardiness, and frequent changes of employment. The regime in recent years has also expanded the number of "closed" factories, whose work is classified, as a means of bringing a larger portion of the industrial labor force under closer control. Workers at "closed" factories receive higher wages but forfeit the right to change jobs.

Despite these changes, for the most part the basic tenets of Brezhnev's labor policy remain intact. Most workers continue to enjoy guaranteed employment, the right to change jobs, the minimum wage, basic social security benefits, and low production norms. For years the regime has experimented with a system that allows managers to fire redundant labor, but widespread bureaucratic resistance as well as systemic obstacles have so far blocked an extension of this experiment. Nevertheless, for several years leadership speeches have indicated growing support for measures to increase wage differentiation. Given the high priority Gorbachev attaches to stimulating labor productivity, it seems likely that he will introduce greater wage inequality, reduce job security for workers, strengthen central regulation of labor mobility, and use the KGB more freely to enforce labor discipline. Echoing Andropov and Chernenko, he has publicly emphasized that workers must work harder to live better.

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Suppressing Dissent and Limiting Foreign Influences

Consistent with the overall effort to shore up discipline, the regime has heightened vigilance against "alien" ideas. It has also increased repression of dissent, resorting in the 1980s to the harshest measures since Stalin's day.

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In policy toward dissidents, 1979 was a watershed year. With the invasion of Afghanistan, Soviet leaders became less concerned to avoid antagonizing Western leaders and publics. With the outbreak of unrest in Poland, they became more concerned with cracking down on dissent inside the USSR itself. The regime tightened the screws even more in 1982, at the same time that Andropov was becoming a more powerful force in the leadership. There has been no letup under Gorbachev.

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Since 1979 several new and refined tactics have been employed: the arrest of dissidents on various false criminal rather than political charges, the planting of drugs and other incriminating evidence in the residences of dissidents to provide the basis for such charges, the resentencing on trumped-up charges of dissidents already serving terms to prevent their release on schedule, the increased use of confinement in psychiatric hospitals, the induction of dissidents into the military, and the increased use of violence both

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against political prisoners and against dissidents still "at large." three Catholic priests have been murdered under suspicious circumstances that suggested KGB involvement. A number of lesser known dissidents have knowingly been allowed to die in prison because of inadequate food or medical care, and reportings of beatings of political prisoners have increased.

Since 1983 the regime has also revised the legal code to broaden the basis for charging dissidents with political crimes and to give the authorities greater control over political prisoners:

- A new law allows labor camp authorities to extend a prisoner's sentence by three years if the prisoner engages in "malicious disobedience." Consequently, imprisoned dissidents who attempt to smuggle out reports of camp conditions, stage hunger strikes, or circulate samizdat can now have their sentences extended by administrative procedure.

- The law dealing with anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda was revised to prohibit any activities financed by foreigners (as, for example, assistance to dissidents through the Solzhenitsyn Fund).

- New sentences of three to eight years have been stipulated for prisoners who "disrupt the work" of corrective labor institutions.

- The penalty for willful abandonment of a place of residence by a person under administrative supervision (which could apply to dissidents going underground) was increased.

In an effort to tighten its control over religious activity, the regime has purged the hierarchy of "official" churches. In 1984 the chairman of the Soviet Council for Religious Affairs—the regime's watchdog organization—was fired along with several Russian Orthodox officials who reportedly had been criticized for failing to control the growth of religion among youth. This past year the regime carried out a similar shakeup of the official Protestant leadership.

The saga of Andrey Sakharov reflects the regime's shift toward a more hardline stance in dealing with dissent. Before 1980 the regime refrained from subjecting Sakharov to disciplinary actions despite his outspoken criticism of regime violations of human rights. That year the regime moved him to the provincial city of Gor'kiy to limit his communication with other dissidents and Westerners. In 1984 the Soviets sentenced Sakharov's wife Elena Bonner to a term of internal exile to bring her under closer control. She has since been allowed to go abroad for medical treatment but told that any communication with Western newsmen would jeopardize her right to return.

Jewish emigration, another barometer of regime policy toward dissent, has declined to a trickle. Exit visas for Jews fell from a high of over 50,000 in 1979 to 840 in 1984. Last year the number rose to just above a thousand as the regime intensified its efforts to manipulate the Jewish emigration issue to induce foreign Jewish groups to tone down their criticism of Soviet domestic policy. German and Armenian emigration have all but ceased as well.

These measures have been accompanied by actions to curtail contacts between dissidents and Westerners and to limit access of other Soviet citizens to news from the outside world. In a three-month period in 1984, for example, at least 16 American and West European supporters of Jewish refuseniks were expelled from the USSR. US Embassy officers have been forcibly detained following meetings with dissidents, and Western newsmen have been threatened with prosecution on trumped-up charges. There have been periodic disruptions of international mail and telephone service. Custom fees have been increased on private gift parcels from the West. The legal code also has been changed to broaden the definition of what constitutes a state secret, which would make it easier to threaten dissidents who talk to foreigners with treason charges. Finally, recent Western press reports of increased KGB use of "spy dust" to track the movements of American diplomats in the USSR have reportedly raised apprehension among some of the US Embassy's Soviet contacts and among refuseniks.

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The Soviets have made a major effort to limit the impact of Western radiobroadcasting. As indicated above, in 1980 they resumed jamming of VOA, RFE, BBC, and Deutsche Welle. A recent emigre reported the Soviets were planning to build jamming stations to block Finnish broadcasts,

According to a recent Soviet emigre, the Soviet police have also cracked down on black-market radio dealers and in Moscow have stepped up the use of roving vans with radio-direction-finding equipment to ferret out listeners of foreign radiobroadcasts.

Dealing With Consumer Demand

While the regime has avoided any massive diversion of resources to the consumer sector beyond the already sizable allocations under Brezhnev, greater attention has been given to improving performance in priority areas, to managing existing resources better, and to improving the distribution system.

In response to the particularly troublesome situation during 1979-81 when the economy hit a low point and food shortages became widespread, Brezhnev in 1982 unveiled a Food Program intended both to upgrade the quality and variety of the diet and to reduce the country's costly dependence on agricultural imports. To bring about these results, the Food Program was to maintain the high level of investment in support of agriculture and related industries while integrating the work of the various organizations involved in the entire chain of economic activity related to food production and distribution. Since the Food Program was announced, the regime has continued to spend a hefty one-third of total investment on agriculture and related industries. Grain and meat imports have also been maintained at a high level.

Since Gorbachev's accession he has indicated by word and deed that he intends to improve consumer welfare. He has:

- Promoted the Food Program and a complementary program to improve overall living conditions in rural backwaters of the country, especially in the non-black-earth zone of the Russian Republic. As agriculture secretary he was heavily involved with both programs.

- Accelerated work on a long-term Consumer Goods and Services Program for the 1986-2000 period. This program—in the works since 1983—was finally approved by the Politburo in September 1985. The production of services and goods other than food is to grow by 30 to 40 percent and 30 percent, respectively, during the 12th Five-Year Plan (1986-90)—twice the rate of estimated growth for the 1981-85 period. For the entire 15-year period, the program projects an average annual rate of growth for consumer services and for nonfood goods (mostly soft goods and consumer durables) of 5 to 6 percent and 4 to 4.5 percent, respectively. Key areas apparently targeted for improvement include telephone services, footwear, housing, local industry, photographic equipment, and household appliances.

- Criticized the work of officials in the consumer sector and replaced two ministers and a party department head with responsibilities in this area.

- Stepped up state aid to families with children and to single mothers, raised the minimum pension for collective farm workers, and provided other amenities for the elderly.

- Announced an ambitious program of preventive medicine for the 1986-90 planning period that will require physical examinations for all citizens in an effort to promote early detection of disease and to target regions with particularly high levels of disease for special attention.

more funds have been earmarked for research on AIDS, a thousand cases of which were reportedly diagnosed during the past year.

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Finally, since 1981 the regime has cautiously acted to reduce restrictions on some types of private economic activity. In that year Brezhnev issued a decree, subsequently reaffirmed in the Food Program, ordering state and collective farm managers to provide more support to private agriculture by such measures as renting equipment for use on private plots. The Politburo under Gorbachev has allocated land for a million new private garden plots for urban dwellers, and Gorbachev has publicly suggested that he favors a further expansion of the private sector. Such an expansion would boost economic output, since private agriculture is extremely productive. Legalization of some private services—reportedly under consideration by a high-level task force on economic reform—would alleviate the impact of deficiencies in the regime's service industry and would complement the campaign against corruption by defining out of existence a whole category of economic crimes. On the negative side, such a move would signify a further retreat by the party from any pretension of complete regulation of the country's economic life.

Improving Propaganda and Public Relations

An important facet of the regime's evolving strategy involves the effort to manage popular expectations and attitudes more effectively. To achieve this end the regime is attempting to reassert its monopoly of information flow, make its propaganda more credible, restore public confidence in the party's attention to the needs of the population and capacity for vigorous action, and improve mechanisms for tapping public opinion.

As a prerequisite to improved public relations, the regime is attempting to cut off the population's access to information from the West or from unofficial sources within the USSR (see section "Suppressing Dissent and Limiting Foreign Influences"). At the same time, since Brezhnev's death the leadership has selectively released more information, at least in some areas, through official media. Thus, Andropov began the practice of publicizing Politburo meetings, and Soviet media over the last few years have begun to provide more statistics and commentary on such things as crime and alcohol abuse.

By such measures, the leadership has sought to give the impression of leveling with the population about internal problems and actively working to remedy them. Gorbachev has said that glossing over problems erodes public confidence in the regime and "opens up a loophole for hostile propaganda," since the Soviet public no longer accepts "oversimplified answers to questions and clearly recognizes falsehood resulting from . . . fear of disclosing . . . the source of problems."

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Confronting shortcomings more openly also enables the regime to interpret them in ways that put the leadership in the most favorable light and to portray problems as aberrations rather than endemic features of the system. In dealing with the corruption issue, the leadership has attempted to deflect criticism of the Politburo by making lower-level officials scapegoats. In discussing consumer problems, the leadership has attempted to shift blame to poor worker performance, saying that "whoever wants to live better must work better."

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The regime has also stepped up efforts to counter the corrosive effects of foreign propaganda and ideological warfare with the West:

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[redacted]

- The heads of the CPSU Propaganda Department, Bloc Liaison Department, and State Committee for Radio and Television have been replaced, [redacted]

Gorbachev is also attempting to project an image of a leader who is both tougher and more accessible. He is trying to demonstrate to the population that there is now a will to follow through once decisions are taken and to confirm that, if tested, the regime is prepared to defend the system with whatever means are necessary. At the same time, Gorbachev is skillfully using high-visibility appearances in Moscow and select provincial cities to demonstrate a desire for direct and informal contact with the public. The prominence accorded his wife is probably also intended to make him seem more human and less remote. [redacted]

Over the past several years the regime has mounted a campaign to pay greater attention to letters from citizens, established commissions in several republics to study public opinion, and encouraged greater use of sociology in identifying public attitudes. In January 1985 the USSR conducted a major sociodemographic survey in which respondents were asked to rank in terms of importance to their standard of living such variables as food supply, medical services, housing, and consumer durables. The Georgian Republic has been especially active in experimenting with public opinion research. Last spring, for example, the republic's party newspaper printed a questionnaire about attitudes toward corruption and economic illegalities and invited readers to respond. Beyond the cosmetic purpose of appearing attentive to popular concerns, soliciting information about the public mood serves the manipulative purpose of enabling the regime to refine its propaganda and to anticipate problems. [redacted] 25X1

On the cultural-intellectual front, the regime is pursuing a mixed policy that seeks to make the spiritual life of the elite and the populace more appealing, while vigilantly squelching anti-Soviet tendencies. A number of controversial films, which had been banned for years, have been released under Gorbachev for public viewing. Matter-of-fact media references to some controversial historical figures, in particular Khrushchev, increased during 1985. In a speech to the Russian Writers Union in December, the controversial poet Yevgeniy Yevtushenko—whose 1962 poem in *Pravda* was one of the most famous attacks on Stalin during Khrushchev's program of de-Stalinization—called for more honest accounts of the collectivization of agriculture, the Stalin purges, and current corruption among officials. *Pravda's* publication last fall of his poem critical of Stalin's repression of writers and the regime's willingness to let him address the Congress suggest that his general position on this issue has the support of some Soviet leaders. Gorbachev himself, in speaking out for a more effective propaganda policy, has publicly called for a more realistic treatment of Soviet history. [redacted] 25X1 25X1 25X1

At the same time, the leadership—and Gorbachev personally—has reemphasized the primacy of political control of artistic creativity and the need for greater "socialist realism." Officials and cultural figures in 25X1

the film industry and theater world have been criticized for glamorizing capitalist life and exaggerating the evils of contemporary Soviet society. The regime knows that—as happened during the "thaw" under Khrushchev—even a limited relaxation of cultural strictures will encourage some intellectuals to test the limits of official toleration of criticism and press for further liberalization.

Strengthening the Social Fabric

The regime in the 1980s has increased efforts to combat youth alienation, adopted a set of measures to bolster the family as "one of the main pillars of society," and mounted under Gorbachev the most determined campaign since 1917 to restrict alcohol consumption. In addition, some steps have been taken to create new support mechanisms to help individual citizens cope better with emotional crises and the stresses of Soviet life.

A series of regime decrees since Brezhnev's death have focused on inculcating youth with the work ethic and patriotism. Draft deferments for university students have been curtailed, ideological education for military conscripts has been increased, and a counter-propaganda campaign to immunize young people from "imported values" has been launched. Artists and writers have been ordered to provide youth with positive socialist heroes and to raise the ideological level of literature directed at youth. Party organizations have been instructed to give high priority to providing leisure and sports activities that provide ideologically wholesome alternatives to Western fashions and cultural patterns as well as to juvenile delinquency and alcohol abuse.

Over the longer term the regime's hopes for remolding youth attitudes rest on the educational reform adopted in April 1984. The reform emphasizes vocational training and is designed to bring more people into the work force at an early age. A major thrust of the education decrees is to tie education more closely to the needs of the economy, but they are also calculated to increase political indoctrination of youth. The regime views vocational education as an important element in forming the character of young people. The emphasis on political education—apparent in the decision to revise social science textbooks and to expand the time allotted to the study of ideological topics—is designed to intensify the ideological motivation of youth. Moreover, the expanded roles of trade union and youth organizations in shaping the educational curriculum signify greater political regulation of education. 25X1

The regime has also attempted to breathe new life into the Komsomol organization to combat the cynicism and indifference of Soviet youth. A series of measures, including a tough party Central Committee resolution issued in July 1984, has sought to rejuvenate the Komsomol leadership, to intensify party control and direction of Komsomol activities, and to reinforce these actions with more effective propaganda: 25X1

- Immediately after Andropov became General Secretary, he replaced the Komsomol chief 25X1
  25X1
  Since Brezhnev's death, Komsomol chiefs in half the Soviet republics have also been replaced. 25X1

- A number of regime decrees have called for fundamental improvement in the work of the Komsomol and in propaganda directed at workers as well as better educated youth.

- A series of leadership statements has called for improved recruiting and greater accountability of Komsomol cadres. As many as 9,000 members were thrown out for indiscipline in 1982. The Komsomol chief implied that this was only the beginning and called on lower-level Komsomol officials to expel youth who fail to show up at work assignments, get drunk, or act only nominally as members. 25X1

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- Party secretary Yegor Ligachev said in a 1984 speech in Minsk that changes in the *nomenklatura* system have expanded Central Committee control over Komsomol appointments.

Gorbachev has taken a series of measures against alcohol abuse that constitute the most concerted and comprehensive attack on the problem ever undertaken in the USSR. A study of the extent and impact of alcoholism by the Central Statistical Administration, completed last spring, reportedly alarmed the Politburo and galvanized Gorbachev to take stern corrective action. In April the Politburo approved a broad remedial program, and in May the implementing decrees were announced. The decrees provided for a graduated reduction of liquor production, increased the penalties for producing moonshine, and set large fines and prison sentences for drunkenness at work or in public. They raised the legal drinking age, imposed harsh penalties for giving liquor to minors, restricted hours for liquor sales, and closed many outlets. The decrees also provided for the formation of a mass temperance society and called for more recreational facilities to provide alternatives to the drinking culture, stepped-up medical treatment for alcoholics, and more resources for preventive programs. In addition, the regime has reduced prices for nonalcoholic beverages, negotiated a contract with a Western company for expanded soft drink production, and sharply raised many liquor prices.

To put teeth into the antialcohol campaign, the regime has adhered rigidly to the principle of elite compliance and accountability. The May decree stipulated fines and dismissals for managers who tolerate drinking by subordinates, thus striking at a key obstacle to enforcement—the tendency of many managers to tolerate drinking on the job in order to retain workers in a period of labor shortages.

Sobriety is said to have become a prerequisite for party membership, and a number of middle-level officials have lost their jobs because of personal lapses or lax enforcement. The widespread belief that Romanov's drinking problem was a factor in his removal has also had a sobering effect on the party elite. 25X1

The campaign is being energetically enforced. In some major cities as many as two-thirds of the liquor outlets have closed and many restaurants have gone dry. Alcohol has disappeared from most official Soviet functions. The militia caught 15,000 trade violators in the first six weeks of the campaign, and thousands of stills have been shut down. With the inception of the campaign, the Soviets ceased publishing any overall statistics on alcohol production, but the Soviet Food Minister has said that many liquor factories are operating at reduced capacity and others are being permanently redirected to other activities. 25X1

So far, these measures have sharply decreased public consumption, and some reporting indicates that drinking on the job has been greatly reduced. 25X1

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Both KGB chief Chebrikov and MVD head Fedorchuk in public speeches and articles have credited the campaign with a drop in the crime rate and an improvement in family life. 25X1

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In the 1980s the regime has undertaken a broad program explicitly directed at reinforcing the family as a source of social cohesion, reversing the declining birthrate in Slavic areas, and preventing divorce. Measures adopted have included partially paid maternity leave, cash grants for births, expansion of the child-care network, interest-free housing loans, preferential access to services for young families, the creation of family counseling centers, the introduction of sex education programs and courses on family life in high schools, and the provision of grants to mothers whose former husbands shirk child-support payments. 25X1

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Figure 10. The antialcohol campaign: clamping down on moonshiners

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There has also been a trend toward increasing the legal responsibility of parents for the behavior of their children. The number of persons charged with inciting minors to drink has increased by a factor of 14. Recent articles in the Soviet press, noting that 70 percent of juvenile drinkers are introduced to alcohol at home, have emphasized that alcoholics lose their parental rights. The educational reform also calls for measures to increase parental responsibility.

On another level, the authorities have recently made available a crisis hotline service in Moscow and Leningrad and stepped up the training of telephone workers providing psychological aid to those in distress.

Soviet television in September began a new series devoted to the problems of young people—particularly loneliness and family breakdown. According to *Izvestiya*, the programs are an attempt to counter a rising number of depressed young adults.

Russian Nationalism

The recent emphasis on Russian nationalist themes in Soviet media probably reflects a heightened desire to buttress internal discipline. In the past, Russian nationalism has been closely associated with repressive social policies. Appeals to Russian nationalism may be intended to lay the groundwork for efforts to assert greater central control over the minority nationalities, who Russian leaders believe are less disciplined and more susceptible to foreign influences than the Russian population. Attempts to associate the regime more closely with traditional Russian nationalism may also be viewed as a means of countering consumer discontent and offsetting the waning of ideology as a legitimizing force in the Russian Republic itself.

The general Soviet Interview Project survey of 2,800 recent emigrants, which included nearly 400 ethnic Russians from the RSFSR, found that the latter ethnic group was less satisfied with its standard of living than the people who lived in the western or southern republics.

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There have been several indications that Russian nationalism is gaining strength as a current of thought in official circles:

- A Central Committee resolution in 1982 marking the anniversary of the formation of the USSR tilted strongly toward Russian nationalism. The resolution placed heavier emphasis than previous official statements during the Brezhnev years on the promotion of Russian-language study as an instrument of integration and on the need to protect the rights of Russians living in non-Russian republics. The resolution also called for greater assistance from non-Russian republics in the development of the RSFSR's Far Eastern and Siberian resources and the non-black-earth zone of European Russia. It attributed a special role to the Russian people in past Soviet achievements, emphasized the centralized character of the Soviet state, and made only passing reference to the theoretical equality of Soviet nationalities.

- Brezhnev, in a March 1982 speech, gave a vigorous endorsement to investment and cadre policies beneficial to the Russian Republic and to Russians living in other Soviet republics. He advocated the migration of workers from Central Asia to areas of the RSFSR suffering labor shortages, criticized the notion that valuable specialists should remain in their own republics when other regions had a greater need for them, and emphasized even more strongly than in the past that projects throughout the RSFSR had priority over those in other regions. He also called for greater representation of ethnic Russians in party and state institutions in non-Russian republics.

- In a December 1982 speech Andropov expanded on these themes and went beyond what Brezhnev had said to stress the role of transportation and the mass media in strengthening political and economic centralization. He also called for the eventual "merger" of Soviet nationalities, thus reviving a code term for intensified Russification that had not been used since the 1960s.

- In a November 1982 article Chernenko reiterated the emphasis on utilizing labor resources on an all-union basis without regard for "parochial" considerations. He also stated that the established national state structure is not "something fixed and immutable." He thus reopened issues that had not been debated openly for years—the possibility of reducing the formal powers of Soviet republics vis-a-vis the center, or of changing republic boundaries to correspond to economic rather than nationality lines.

- Gorbachev reportedly has stated on several occasions that without a firm grip at the center the many races in the Soviet Union would have flown apart and produced chaos. Whether or not the new General Secretary has an emotional identification with Russian nationalism, he is evidently aware of its utility as a force for cohesion in the country. 25X1

In cadre policy, the regime continues to appoint Russians as second secretaries in the non-Russian republics to serve as political watchdogs. Unlike the situation 20 years ago, today all republic second secretaries are Russians. This ongoing effort to increase Moscow's control and more vigorously combat corruption among entrenched ethnic elite groups is combined with continuing efforts to co-opt non-Russian elites by giving them considerable opportunities for career advancement on an individual basis. 25X1
the appointments of Shevardnadze as Foreign Minister and Aliyev as First Deputy 25X1
Premier were intended in part to mollify the expanding non-Slavic population and to accord non-Slavs greater visibility in the central apparatus. 25X1

Prospects for the Future

During the rest of the 1980s and well beyond, the troubles of Soviet society are not likely to present a fundamental challenge to regime control, nor to threaten the economy with collapse. It does not appear likely that the threshold of sustained, widespread, and coordinated mass unrest (as in Poland)

will be crossed in this decade. The regime almost certainly will be able to suppress disturbances that occur and to prevent any snowball effect. Nonetheless, the manifold problems besetting the Soviet system are likely to dominate the domestic affairs of the USSR for the foreseeable future and could well produce intense policy and political struggle. More than in the past, the leadership seems aware that it cannot afford to ignore public opinion and the mood of the population, and Gorbachev is moving vigorously to address pent-up problems that have suffered from neglect. These are complex and deeply rooted issues, however, and success is likely to be only partial. While political control does not appear to be at stake, many of the regime's other cherished goals could be if Gorbachev and his colleagues do not manage these problems effectively.

Pressures and Opportunities for Change

Domestic pressures for significant change in Soviet policy are greater today than they have been for at least two decades. Societal strains that developed during Brezhnev's last years demand attention, the political environment is conducive to policy initiatives, and the new leader clearly intends to attack internal problems forcefully.

Societal Pressures. The problems in Soviet society are multidimensional, mutually reinforcing, and—if not adequately handled—potentially explosive. By all indications, alienation has grown among significant elements of society—youth, ethnic Russians and non-Russians, religious believers, women, workers, bureaucrats, and consumers. In the near term, societal stresses may well produce spontaneous large-scale localized disturbances—involving demonstrations, strikes, and violence. The chances of such incidents are greatest in minority areas where many problems converge. In Estonia, for example, most of the preconditions for unrest exist: resentment of Russian domination, susceptibility to foreign influences, youth hostility toward the regime, consumer shortages, and religious activism. A catalyst—such as a regime move to draft large numbers of Estonians for service in Afghanistan—could touch off serious protests. Short of large-scale disorders, there is a significant possibility that small underground terrorist groups could form in some non-Russian areas.

The need to prevent unrest and to limit the economic costs of low public morale will be a major factor influencing leadership behavior. Some leaders are likely to urge steps to pacify the population and others to urge a tightening of controls over the population. Most likely, regime policy will continue to combine both coercive and conciliatory measures to prevent a systemic crisis from developing—such as importing grain while working to strengthen the mechanism for enforcing discipline. The regime could err badly, however, misjudging the popular mood, mismanaging elite expectations, and adopting counterproductive policies. A sudden lurch toward either extreme repression or radical reform could lead to widespread social unrest or to more assertive behavior on the part of dissatisfied elites. 25X1

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Political Forces. The leadership's determination to defend the system is a major regime strength and contrasts with the situation during periods of instability in East European countries since World War II. In most cases of political crisis in Eastern Europe—in Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland in 1980—a loss of confidence at the top and fundamental divisions within the leadership were the condition and the harbinger of the ensuing events. In the USSR of the 1980s we think it unlikely that any conflict that emerges within the leadership will be so serious as to bring into question the institutional mainstays, core beliefs, and party-dominated formula of the Soviet system. 25X1

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Within the broader elite, there are signs of dissatisfaction and impatience both with the current condition of society and with the quality of leadership the Politburo has provided in recent years. But, unless the leadership blunders badly or settles once again into a pattern of prolonged inertia, most elite groups will continue to see their interests best served by defending rather than abandoning the regime. These elites would probably rally to the support of the system should societal strains threaten to destabilize the regime. 25X1

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Figure 11. "Getting it together" under Gorbachev

The selection of Gorbachev as party leader shows that the Politburo has not lost its will to rule or to act against pervasive problems. For the first time in a decade the USSR has a healthy, young general secretary who is an activist both by inclination and by virtue of his diagnosis of the type of leadership the country needs at this juncture. Gorbachev has restored an image of action and purpose at the top, showing that he is in charge, on the job, and on the move. In a short time, he has demonstrated his intention to transform the creaking bureaucratic machinery into an engine for change. As the youngest general secretary since Stalin, he has time to develop and implement a long-range strategy. He is consolidating power much faster than his recent predecessors. The old guard is outclassed and in disarray. The 1986 party congress has given him an opportunity to reshape the Central Committee and bring in his own supporters—unlike Andropov and Chernenko, who were saddled with the Central Committee elected under Brezhnev by the 1981 congress.

In addition, Gorbachev has shown that he is a tough, shrewd politician in the Leninist mold—a man who intends to employ his power rather than savoring and protecting it, as Brezhnev did in his last years. Leadership and cadre changes indicate his capacity for hard political infighting and willingness to use control of personnel appointments—the traditional base of the general secretary's power—as a weapon against deadwood and bureaucratic resistance to his program. Gorbachev also has effective public relations skills. While personality alone cannot solve the regime's longstanding problems, the power of personality in the office of general secretary does count in the Soviet scheme of things. The Russian people traditionally have wanted and responded to strong charismatic leadership.

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The political climate appears more favorable to some change than it has for a long time. The ruling elite, while fearful of the consequences, wants changes and believes they are needed. Dissatisfaction with past leadership efforts to cope with mounting social and economic problems undoubtedly gave impetus to Gorbachev's selection and has helped his program. In solidifying his power and mobilizing support for reform initiatives, Gorbachev can tap the desire of many citizens and elites for strong leadership at the top and greater discipline and order throughout society. There is reportedly widespread acceptance of Gorbachev's fight against alcohol abuse among many segments of the population, although grumbling that it goes too far. Many privileged youth who had been alienated by the Soviet system reportedly are enthusiastic about Gorbachev. The campaign against corruption is popular.

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According to USIA surrogate interviews and some Soviet surveys of elite attitudes, a shift of opinion has also taken place within the party intelligentsia on the issue of economic reform. There is now broad recognition of the need for changes in the economic mechanism. Many people accept that minor tinkering is not enough, although there is no universal agreement on a formula for change and still much uncertainty about the direction and details of Gorbachev's own program for revitalizing the economy.

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The imminent transfer of power to a whole new generation within the elite also offers a major potential source of change. The generation that led the USSR from the ravages of Stalinism and World War II through the enormous expansion of power over the past 30 years is fast leaving the scene. Now a new guard stands poised to take charge and to try to breathe new life into the Soviet system—a generation

of men in their fifties and sixties not handicapped by the memories of Stalin or the insecurities of their war-scarred elders, far better educated than the Brezhnevs and Chernenkos, probably more secure, certainly more worldly, and perhaps less ideologically inspired and more pragmatic. Gorbachev has brought into his own brain trust some of the best and brightest, such as Abel Aganbegyan—a severe critic of the economic bureaucracy's inertia.

Constraints on Change

Arrayed against these pressures and opportunities for policy change, however, are formidable obstacles. Powerful systemic factors and vested interests will constrain both the pace and scope of reforms. Most societal problems are not amenable to quick fixes, and some regime "cures" could make social "diseases" worse rather than better. At the same time, many elite elements will resist moving too fast to change the system—both out of concern to protect bureaucratic prerogatives and out of fear that reform could be more destabilizing than "standing pat."

Elite Resistance. Gorbachev himself has no desire to undertake radical systemic reforms. His speeches and actions underscore his overall commitment to a centrally planned economy and a directed socialist society in which the party has a monopoly of political power. Having spent his entire career in the party apparatus, he is as much a product of the system as his peers and has been conditioned to exclude from consideration any significant move to adopt market socialism or greater political pluralism. Like other Soviet leaders, he probably sees a strong correlation between maintenance of a command economy and maintenance of party power, control over the multinational Soviet empire, and hegemony over Eastern Europe. Soviet leaders have an ideological affinity for the planned economy and an emotional one as well, probably seeing it as having been a critical factor responsible for victory in World War II and the USSR's rise to superpower status. From a purely economic standpoint, they probably believe the existing system has the outstanding virtue of being known to *work,* however inefficiently.

Even limited efforts to rejuvenate the system will meet the institutional resistance of a vast, entrenched bureaucracy that derives power, privilege, and security from things as they are. Not just corrupt elements who stand to lose their jobs and perks but many party *apparatchiki* fear that any significant changes, once initiated, could acquire an uncontrollable life of their own. Even some of those who realize that things must change do not have their hearts in it. Their bureaucratic mindsets make them alien to and fearful of change. The poet Yevgeniy Yevtushenko, in a poem recently published in *Pravda,* characterized such timid bureaucrats who oppose innovation as "what-if-it-doesn't-work-out-right-ists." Similarly, economic decentralization is resisted not only by the central ministries but also by many lower-level managers who are not used to accepting responsibility and are ill prepared for a more competitive future and a technological world. With their keen instincts of self-preservation, moreover, Soviet bureaucratic elites have proved quite adept at frustrating the reform efforts of past Soviet leaders. Indeed, Gorbachev recently conceded that the process of change was going more slowly than expected, complained of the immense "inertia" of the system, and acknowledged the existence of "opposition" to his program in the middle ranks of the party and government bureaucracies and among "first secretaries on the periphery."

Any drive to revamp the party and government hierarchies will be an uphill struggle. Their sheer size betrays the magnitude of the task involved in sweeping out the ranks. While moving forcefully against corrupt and incompetent officials, Gorbachev cannot undertake a highly arbitrary—much less "permanent"—purge, creating such insecurity that the ruling elite comes to believe that survival is based on whim rather than results, performance, or political ties. He cannot afford to alienate too deeply the bureaucratic elites that are the mainstay of the system and whose assistance is needed to implement policy and other changes.

Altering resource allocation policy significantly will also be difficult. Gorbachev's strategy for revitalizing the economy assigns overriding priority to investment in machine building. This priority, reflected in the 1986-90 Plan guidelines, has major implications for

defense. Current investment goals will limit defense growth—especially military procurement, which is likely to continue the trend of the past decade by growing about 1 percent per year. But even at such levels the Soviets will be able to complete the broad-based modernization of strategic and general purpose programs now under way. There are indications that not all military and civilian leaders are convinced the time is ripe to limit military spending for the sake of the economy. Thus, efforts to hold down growth in defense spending in favor of industrial modernization and/or improved consumer welfare could prove politically risky if Gorbachev's modernization program fails to bring the expected benefits to the military industrial base or if relations with the United States deteriorate.

Societal Constraints. Many social ills—such as alcoholism, drug abuse, and crime—are symptoms of larger problems that are virtually intractable as long as the regime is determined to avoid a massive redirection of resources to consumption or an expansion of popular participation in political life. In the absence of such fundamental changes, there are limits to how far the regime can move toward either reform or repression without provoking unrest, on the one hand, or killing worker incentives on the other.

Guaranteed personal security and welfare benefits have been key elements of the social contract between the Soviet regime and society throughout the post-Stalin period, and any move threatening these elements will generate popular apprehension. Many types of economic reform would undercut job security. Price reforms would reduce state subsidies of food, commodities, rent, and transportation. New appeals for exertion and sacrifice will not be welcomed by a population that has grown accustomed to the regime's toleration of lax work discipline and that wants to be left alone to pursue private interests. A more authoritarian pattern of political life would hardly elicit the initiative, creativity, and motivation that economic progress demands. Attempts to revive active popular support for the regime by holding out too many hopes for material improvements would run the risk of courting further disillusionment if the regime failed to deliver on its promises.

Near-Term Strategy and Outlook

While we do not expect major systemic changes under Gorbachev, we think that limited but vigorous reforms and policy initiatives are more likely now than in many years. These will probably take place within the framework of the main policy lines that Gorbachev has already set. The leadership over the next several years will probably extend its current course—appointing younger, more talented cadre throughout the party and government apparatus, "squeezing" more out of the economy through more efficient use of existing resources and methods, plugging the loopholes for bureaucratic corruption and social deviance, increasing ideological indoctrination about the evils of capitalism, clamping down further on citizen contacts with foreigners, and generally running a much tighter ship.

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Stronger "law and order" will probably remain the central leitmotiv of Gorbachev's rejuvenation program.

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Gorbachev last July in a public speech in Minsk emphasized that "all in all there should be more order in our house." All Soviet citizens—including members of the elite—will be under the gun to toe the line of harder work and cleaner living, and they can expect the authorities to be less tolerant of all forms of "antisocialist behavior."

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Building from a base of improved discipline and motivation, Gorbachev hopes to alleviate some societal ills indirectly by boosting long-term growth and modernization of the economy. Soviet leaders probably feel that, if they get the economy moving, even endemic social problems could be better controlled—a higher rate of economic growth would provide more resources to moderate discontent and improve consumer welfare. Gorbachev is pinning his hopes on an acceleration of scientific and technological progress as the linchpin of his economic strategy and is directing increased investment into machine building.

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In the longer run, amelioration of those social problems that are most tightly linked to the economy and consumption levels depends on the ability of the regime to implement management reforms and worker incentives that promote the introduction of new technology throughout the economy. The regime may also widen the scope for private economic activity somewhat and take cautious steps to redistribute income by greater differentiation of wages. It will probably continue to move cautiously on management reorganization, seeking to minimize political opposition and avoid structural disruptions. Its ability to find the right combination of measures to increase enterprise initiative and worker motivation while preserving the essentials of central planning is uncertain, however. Psychological obstacles to collective innovation and risk taking, deeply rooted in Soviet culture, will continue to inhibit technological modernization for years to come, no matter how effective the Gorbachev leadership is.

What is most likely to occur institutionally are shifts in the balance of power among the bureaucratic empires that underpin the regime. For example, there has already been a rise in the KGB's overall influence, and we might see it acquire greater enforcement responsibilities in the economy and in society as the struggle against corruption and deviant social behavior intensifies.

Gorbachev is likely to involve the party more deeply in the economy and in areas of social and private life that have slipped beyond regime regulation in recent years. He apparently envisions an expanded party role in spearheading technological change and in raising socialist consciousness—tasks that will probably require further restructuring of the party apparatus, especially its economic and propaganda components, and upgrading of cadre skills. At the same time, the General Secretary will most likely step up efforts to raise the party's prestige and its standards of conduct.

In the government, there is likely to be a reorganization of the ministries that will increase the autonomy of plant managers in day-to-day decisionmaking and give Gosplan greater authority compared with the ministries. At the top of the governmental pyramid, more "superministry" bodies—along the lines of the new Bureau for Machine Building or the State Committee for Agro-Industry—will probably be formed to oversee and coordinate large complexes of activity or groups of related ministries. Party-government relations may also be restructured, but, as in the past, Politburo politics and the evolution of leadership alignments—especially the relationship between the Premier and the General Secretary—will determine the exact shape of the power balance between the party and government bureaucracies.

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Future top-level personnel changes may largely follow the recruitment patterns set since Brezhnev's death. On the one hand, there may be more promotions of people like Geydar Aliyev, Eduard Shevardnadze, and Boris Pugo (the former KGB chief in Latvia)—all long experienced in police or Komsomol work (as is Gorbachev), with reputations of combating corruption, but lacking in economic training or economic management experience. And, on the other hand, there will probably be more promotions of people like Nikolay Ryzhkov, Lev Zaykov (newly appointed Central Committee secretary), and Nikolay Slyunkov (the new first secretary of Belorussia), all of whom are technocrats with modest party political credentials.

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We might also see further reassignments of top executive talent from the defense industrial sector—like Georgiy Kolmogorov (since 1984, head of the USSR State Committee for Standards) and Lev Voronin (the new chairman of the USSR State Committee for Material and Technical Supply)—to critical posts in the civilian economy. A well-connected middle-level Soviet official in January told US Embassy officers that Gorbachev—who took over the cadres portfolio in the leadership under Andropov—"personally approves every Central Committee–level *nomenklatura* appointment," and we can expect him to continue to oversee closely this critical activity.

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Even if the regime is able to produce some marginal upswing in economic performance, arrest the erosion of instruments of control and mobilization, and perhaps generate somewhat greater popular respect and support for itself, Soviet leaders will face continuing problems in the foreseeable future. Therapeutic measures taken by the regime—cadre renewal, disciplinary sanctions, wage differentiation, and bureaucratic restructuring—are likely to heighten rather than decrease tensions in the population and within the elite that result from anxiety and insecurity.

Gorbachev's personnel "blitzkrieg" has created "extreme tension" throughout the bureaucracy. such nervousness and fear of loss of power have not been seen since the immediate post-Stalin period. The Gorbachev team is, indeed, counting on such tension to spur worker and cadre performance and move the system out of its lethargy. The broader the scope of change and the more rapid its pace, the greater the potential for stress will be. Although the leadership expects to control these tensions, its ability to manage all the side effects is not certain.

Competition for prerogatives and position among different elements of officialdom will be heightened by several factors: the enforcement of higher performance standards for elites, the increased priority in cadre policy for those with technocratic backgrounds, the diminished opportunities for those with agitation and propaganda backgrounds, the replacement of older party workers with younger men, the move to give more preferential treatment to Russian elites in non-Russian republics, the campaign against official corruption, and the limitations on elite job security. The heightened role of the KGB in enforcing elite discipline will be resented by the military and by some party officials. Shifts in resource allocation policy will pit different bureaucracies against one another. The adoption of controversial new social policies such as the antialcohol campaign will intensify elite debate over whether a new course will disrupt the uneasy truce between state and society. Intensified moves to clean out and shape up the party ranks will strain internal party unity.

Regime efforts to tighten the reins on all aspects of Soviet life will also heighten conflict within Soviet society. A tougher work ethic, stricter discipline, and more differentiated wages will strain relations at the workplace between high performers who stand to gain and low performers who stand to lose. Stringent measures against alcohol abuse will increase the chances of labor unrest. Growing emphasis on stronger parental guidance and responsibility for the "sins of the children" could well exacerbate family tensions and intensify generational conflict. Ordinary citizens will find the campaigns against crime and economic illegality, alcoholism, and religion increasingly cutting into their personal lives and constraining their public behavior. The curtailment of draft deferments will antagonize those previously able to avoid military service. The educational reform will be resented by those whose opportunities for upward social mobility are restricted by it. Intensified Russification may lead to more extreme forms of protest among disaffected minorities.

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The degree to which the regime succeeds in implementing its strategy will depend to some extent on its ability to manage these conflicts and tensions. Essentially, the regime is placing a wager on the strong elements of both the elite and the society—the most patriotic, sober, industrious, honest, and socially conservative citizens and officials who combine an acceptance of authoritarian rule with concern to purge the country of "alien" influences and to make the economy more productive.

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In addition, success will also hinge on how adroitly the regime manages expectations. During his first year as General Secretary, Gorbachev has generated popular enthusiasm and received high marks, but his domestic popularity is by no means universal.

he has also generated disappointment among some segments of the population because he has not gone further, and among others who believe he is moving too far too fast:

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- intellectuals believe he is more show than substance and lacks a clear agenda.

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[redacted]

- [redacted] dissatisfaction with the heavyhanded implementation of the antialcohol campaign. The campaign has generated resentment and frustration among the public and has heightened officials' concern about potential worker unrest. The Embassy has received reports of worker unrest over the campaign in several cities. [redacted]

[redacted]

- Soviet press articles have suggested that Gorbachev's economic reforms are meeting resistance from ideologues in the party and the government. A *Pravda* article in June suggested that some reforms currently under consideration are fraught with serious social and ideological consequences. [redacted]

[redacted]

Unfulfilled expectations will probably become a growing concern for Gorbachev. The leadership's failure over the last several years to address economic stagnation and social malaise has produced a deep-seated cynicism among broad elements of the population that will not be easily eradicated. There may be broad swings in the public mood in the coming years as Gorbachev engages in a balancing act to combat pessimism while keeping popular expectations from getting out of hand. [redacted]

Opposition to Gorbachev within the leadership and the broader elite for now appears disorganized. But the success Gorbachev has achieved in expanding his power will not guarantee success for his policies. Should his program fail to spur economic growth or lead to significant popular protest, latent opposition within segments of the elite could coalesce, disagreements might surface among his own allies within the leadership, and Gorbachev might fall. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

Overall, however, we believe that Gorbachev's political position will remain strong and the USSR under his more dynamic leadership is likely to see some improvement in system performance over the next few years. Though difficult to quantify, the coming to power of a new generation of more aggressive and competent elites will probably have some galvanizing impact. Gorbachev's "get tough" strategy, in our judgment, is likely not only to strengthen regime instruments of coercion but also to have an overall positive impact on economic performance and the public mood. The revitalization program, if vigorously implemented, could provide a relatively immediate growth dividend that could be used to bolster worker morale and underwrite future growth. [redacted] 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1

It seems unlikely, however, that Gorbachev will be able to introduce reforms significant enough to arrest long-range negative trends in Soviet society. He is holding out the vision of profound change, but he will probably have to settle for considerably less. In fact, initial successes may reduce the pressure for more change. If modest economic reforms or such measures as the antialcohol campaign bring some relief to economic stress, enhance social controls, and improve the regime's image in the eyes of the population, the heat will, in a sense, be off the Politburo, and Soviet leaders may decide to forgo more significant changes. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

Soviet internal problems are to a considerable degree endemic given the basic structure of the system. Economic growth is constrained by systemic inefficiencies that cannot be removed without undertaking reforms more radical than those on any leader's agenda. Social problems are inevitable in a state that is held together by authoritarian rule and that by its very nature represses ethnic and religious minorities. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

Soviet societal problems are not merely "vestiges of the past" that have endured, but the results of contemporary conditions that the regime is unable or unwilling to alter. Some societal problems are consequences of Brezhnev policies that can be modified, but others are byproducts of policies the regime is loath to abandon. The growing sophistication of consumer demand, for example, is a natural consequence of the very process of economic modernization that the regime wants to further. The growing size of the critically thinking public is the result of expanded education, which is essential to the country's progress. The exposure of the population to external influences is partly because of technological advances in communications beyond the regime's control. The regime cannot insulate its population completely from the outside world unless it withdraws into autarkic isolation, which Soviet leaders see as undesirable politically and impossible economically.

Thus, although the regime will be able to contain societal tensions for the foreseeable future, long-range trends are producing a fundamental and growing disparity between popular aspirations and the regime's capacity to satisfy them. Over time, these trends may produce consequences that are incalculable at present. The evolution of the Soviet system and the society will continue to be shaped by conflicting forces that will make a balance between controls and dynamism hard to strike. Over a decade ago, the late dissident Andrey Amalrik summed up the essential dilemma: In order to remain in power, the regime must change and evolve, but in order to preserve itself, everything must remain unchanged.

Future Options and Alternative Courses

If it becomes apparent over the next few years that the present strategy is not successfully coming to grips with Soviet domestic problems, the Gorbachev regime or a successor will face growing pressure to take bolder actions. The Politburo would have to deal more directly with whether:

- Changes must be made in resource allocation strategy that would force the leadership to "bite the bullet" and opt for a less balanced approach toward growth in defense, consumption, and investment.
- More serious management reforms should be undertaken that would allow for greater decentralization, increased use of material incentives, and a stronger role for market forces.
- More draconian and orthodox measures would reinstill discipline in society, root out bureaucratic corruption, and stimulate more productive labor.
- The regime should fall back on its Slavic base and tilt even further toward Russian nationalism as the basis for political legitimacy.

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These choices and other related ones define two broad possible policy directions Soviet leaders might be compelled to consider over the next several years. For Gorbachev, each course would involve altering the mix of carrots and sticks—of showing more "smile" or "teeth"—to secure his domestic revitalization goals. In certain respects, some elements would be consistent with either a tougher or a more lenient option. Moreover, elements of both are already under way and underlie the current mixed, but essentially conservative, course.

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Toward Greater Reform. One policy direction would be toward more liberalizing reforms and a relaxation of controls. This path could include such steps as:

- A shift of resources from defense and heavy industry in the direction of consumption.
- Sharp reductions in the powers of central planners and management and the introduction of market mechanisms in large portions of the economy, the legalization of substantial small-scale private enterprise, and considerable loosening of conditions for foreign participation in the Soviet economy.
- More cultural, territorial, and administrative autonomy along nationality lines.

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- Stricter accountability for officials and party members before the law, reduction of the privileges and salaries of party *apparatchiki*, and greater protection of public criticism of official abuses.
- An opening up of the political process at lower levels to include somewhat greater popular participation and more open and competitive selection of cadres.

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Gorbachev does not look like a Deng Xiaoping and is surely not an Alexander Dubcek. But if lesser measures do not boost economic growth, we cannot rule out the possibility that he will embark on more sweeping reforms—similar to the Soviet New Economic Policy of the 1920s or recent Hungarian-style experiments. Such reforms, while trying to preserve central control of the "commanding heights" and priority programs, open the Soviet economy to greater private enterprise, industrial competition, and foreign interaction. Gorbachev acknowledged in a recent public interview that proponents of more rapid change exist inside the party and are pushing him to do more. In November, for example, his economic guru, Abel Aganbegyan, told US Embassy officials that he himself wants to go further than Gorbachev in privatizing the service sector and perhaps legalizing parts of the second economy.

The regime could also permit a deeper "thaw" in cultural life, allowing a significantly broader array of innovative styles in the arts and expanding the complex of historical and contemporary subjects that could be critically addressed by intellectuals. Such liberalization could involve reopening the whole issue of de-Stalinization.

Adopting such a liberal option would be risky and controversial. Those who hold political power would see liberalizing reforms as essentially dismantling their capacity to rule and the privileges that stem from it. Many elites would persuasively argue that liberalization would not work, that such a profound change in the system would produce political chaos, economic collapse, and possibly a revolution. Most Russians would feel threatened by political or economic concessions to the minority nationalities. Similarly, such a course would create fears among ordinary Soviets about maintaining social order and personal security in a more liberal political and competitive economic environment.

The regime would consequently move in a liberalizing direction only under extreme duress. In cultural policy, for example, only the prospect of large numbers of intellectuals becoming involved in active dissent or of a hemorrhage of intellegentsia defections to the West would cause the regime to consider embarking on a major liberalization—although under such circumstances a sharp move toward repression would be more likely. Similarly, progress on the human rights front should not be expected unless economic problems mounted to the point that military spending constrained consumption and investment so seriously as to make Western trade concessions much more essential than at present. 25X1

Toward Greater Repression. The regime could, on the other hand, opt to tighten the screws even further at home. This path would probably lead to:

- A substantial shift of resources away from consumption to heavy industry and defense. 25X1
- Increased repression of cultural expression in non-Russian areas, more overt discrimination against native elites in cadre appointments in non-Russian areas, and a more assertive reliance on Russian nationalism to generate political legitimacy. 25X1
- Much deeper and broader personnel turnover, sweeping cuts in the size of the party and government bureaucracies, greater use of the anticorruption campaign as a tool of political purge, large-scale expulsions of party members, and greater use of anonymous informing in monitoring elite behavior. 25X1
- Increased reliance on coercion in all aspects of Soviet life, stiffer penalties and fines for antisocial behavior, rigid enforcement of measures to curtail labor mobility, forced migration of labor, and punitive measures to enforce work discipline.
- A further crackdown on religion—especially semi-legal sects and underground clergy—the closing or burning of churches, and more severe limitations on the Russian Orthodox Church.
- Breaking the social contract by creating and tolerating unemployment and sharply differentiating wages. 25X1 25X1

A marked turn in this direction would most likely reflect a growing sense of desperation within the leadership about the domestic situation and heightened perceptions of a threat to regime/party control. It might be precipitated by political violence and the assassination of Gorbachev or some other Soviet leader, by the threat of a coup by strongly nationalist and conservative military elements, or by rising societal tensions and civil disorders.

Under such circumstances, the crackdown on antisocial behavior could assume extremely ugly forms. "Parasites" and "alien elements," for example, could be hounded as new "enemies of the people," charged with undermining the Soviet system and society and linked with foreign subversion. Moscow's drive to speed technological progress could give way to a kind of forced reindustrialization of the USSR and intensified social engineering to propel the country into the computer age. Historical necessity would probably be used once again to legitimize extraordinary measures and sacrifice. These policies could be coupled with a return to one-man rule as well, which other Politburo members would tolerate only if they believed a state of true emergency threatening the regime's power existed.

Many Soviet elites would find such a course ideologically repellent, bureaucratically disruptive, politically risky, economically uncertain, and dangerous to them personally. Major segments of the population at large would be further alienated by extreme repression—especially non-Russian nationalities. While Stalin was able to move the country in this direction 60 years ago, it is open to question whether this course could be accomplished under vastly different economic, social, political, and international circumstances. Such a remedy could turn out to be more destabilizing than the situation it was designed to correct, and would be an option only if the internal situation deteriorated to the point that retention of control overwhelmed all other Kremlin goals.

No Surprise-Free Future

It is by no means certain which course or combination of policies the Gorbachev regime will ultimately adopt or how far change will reach. In view of the significant changes in the last year, further unconventional leadership changes and surprises appear probable. Some of Gorbachev's personnel moves have been unexpected, and he has consolidated power much faster than expected. Similarly, the antialcohol campaign was unexpected, and he may undertake more unpredictable policy moves. According to Embassy sources, for example, a new task force on economic reform organized in August is reportedly considering jettisoning two longtime sacred cows—"no unemployment" and "no competition." Within the group there is reportedly support for the view that some low level of unemployment would serve as an effective labor discipline tool and that some mechanism allowing inefficient firms to fail would contribute to improved economic performance.

Indeed, Gorbachev's domestic revitalization program is still wrapped in considerable uncertainty and could usher in more policy change as it unfolds. The political momentum he already enjoys augurs well for his future ability to take bolder steps, and the ambitious nature of the goals he has set increases the odds that he will have to do so. A "fresh wind" is apparent under Gorbachev, and the precedents of the last 20 years are almost certainly not good indicators of what will happen in the future.

Implications for the United States

The intensification of Soviet domestic problems since the mid-1970s has affected regime attitudes toward the United States in two contradictory ways. On the one hand, Soviet leaders today probably are more desirous of a breathing space to ease the task of managing internal difficulties than they were 10 years ago. They also may perceive a greater need for imports both of agricultural commodities to meet consumer requirements and of Western technology to further economic development. On the other hand, Soviet leaders today appear more apprehensive than previously about becoming vulnerable to Western economic pressure and ideological influence. Heightened concern about the adverse social consequences of opening up somewhat to the West makes it psychologically difficult for them to be flexible on human rights issues to obtain the breathing space they would like.

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The enhanced desire for economic self-sufficiency and fear of becoming dependent on the West make it psychologically difficult for them to enter into economic arrangements with Western countries on any terms that involve political concessions. 25X1

How these contradictory impulses will affect Soviet behavior toward the United States during the rest of the 1980s is difficult to predict. The Soviet economy is not in such dire straits that US economic pressure would bring the regime to its knees. The Soviets can import most of what they need from other countries, but they still find the United States attractive as a supplier because of its unique year-round capacity to deliver large volumes of grain quickly at short notice and its technological superiority in many critical areas. Their desire for access to US grain supplies and some high-technology equipment could make them relatively flexible in economic negotiations, even if they resisted any linkage of economic bargains to political concessions. 25X1

Western and US radiobroadcasts increase domestic pressures on the Soviet leadership to satisfy a variety of popular demands—for improved supply of consumer goods, for greater cultural freedom and political rights of non-Russians, and for greater opportunities to travel outside the USSR. To the extent that an easing of political tensions between the USSR and the United States would lead to a relaxation of barriers to the movement of people and ideas, moreover, the regime's monopoly of information flow and consequently its ability to indoctrinate its population would be weakened. 25X1